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THE BLUE GENTIAN.

BY W. W. LONG.

Mid the frozen peaks of the Alps,
A blue-eyed flower doth grow;
Loved by the winter's icy chill,
It blooms in endless snow.

Village maids in sunlit glens
Call it "Life in Death;"
Old men call it "Sleep-no-more,"
And kiss it with tender breath.

IN SEVERED PATHS

BY THE AUTHOR OF "PENKIVEL," "OLIVE VARCOE," "WITH THIS RING I WED THEE," ETC.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HAROLD caught Daniel's hand and held it for a moment without speaking.

"Look to your pistol, sir, we start now in waun minute."

"Daniel, what that man Trevel said about his pistol is to my mind conclusive evidence that his hand shot down Tristram Carbonelli's."

Harold spoke slowly, looking to the priming of his pistol the while. He had grown pale, and the lines of his face had hardened.

"That was my notion, too, sir, even when I first spoke to you; but, in thinking of it, I can't see no reason for such a deed."

"What was Trevel's character on board the 'Alert'?" asked Harold.

"Bad, I fear. And some say he was a spy for both sides—Preventive men and smugglers."

"There lies the motive," said Harold, as he placed the pistol in his breast-pocket. "Tristram doubtless knew of his treachery to the service, and the man feared he would divulge it to Captain Armstrong."

"That don't account for what he said himself about his Captain," replied Daniel slowly.

"No, that's true. Daniel, one question before we start. Why did you write so frankly to Mrs. Armstrong?"

"Frankly?" repeated Daniel. "I did but tell the story of the wreck as we saw it, and the Preventive officer took down my words for the poor lady. I was sorry for her, sir, as any man might be."

"No offence, Daniel; but I thought it a pity you should have mentioned Tristram's death, and my pursuit of the 'Alert', and—and all the rest of it."

"You mean your brave swim after Captain Armstrong? I did tell that; but I never said waun word else."

With this Daniel caught up his big watch and beckoned to Harold to follow him.

In two minutes more both were on the dark Thames, with Joe and another lad rowing them swiftly to the dimly-seen shore. As they floated onwards, sitting in silence, Harold pondered Daniel's disclaimer and Mary Armstrong's words, and, putting his hand on his pocket-book, in which he had placed the jeweled pen she gave him, he wondered whether his expedition that night would militate against the promise that pen had written.

The tide had turned and was rushing up the river, bringing a cold air with it tasting of the sea and a mist which covered all things with a damp and dreary pall. The wash of the tide brought the rowers rather suddenly against the steps of the landing-place, and the boat struck them with a dull thud.

"Steady, lads!" said Daniel, as, with a strong hand placed against the stairs, he thrust the boat several yards back from the steps. "Now hearken, both of 'ee, to what I have to say. You, Joe, and Michael, are to come down here at four o'clock, and wait waun hour till five; then, if we don't come back, Michael will do what I tould 'un just now."

"All right!" returned Joe, with a wistful look in his keen eyes. I wish I was going 'long with 'ee. Simmin to me, three is a luckier number than two."

"No, no, Joe; it is no fit place for you where we are going to."

"Then I'd bide outside of it," said Joe, and whistle to give warning of I seed anything oogly coming; or I'd go for help if it is needed."

"There's something in that," observed Harold, whispering for a moment to Daniel, who, turning now to the other lad, asked him if he could take the boat back to the "Curlew" alone.

"I should reckon I could," returned the youngster, with immense confidence.

"Then come along, Joe," said Harold, springing ashore as the boat again touched the steps.

At the same moment a dark object rose out of the water with a splash, and shook itself with great energy.

"I'm dashed if it ain't your dog, sir!" exclaimed Josiah. "He've swimmed arter us all the way. Well, I'm glad; for he'll be rare company for me as I bide outside waiting for 'ee."

"That's true; for Lion is a better protector than a watchman," said Harold, with a feeling of satisfaction that the boy he was taking into danger should have a guard.

Once more Daniel gave his orders to the other lad, whose oars now backed water and took the boat away into the silent darkness that brooded over the rushing river. It was like the departure of an ark of safety and all three stood for an instant on the squalid shore listening to the thud of the oars which rose into the night like the beat of a great heart, or the tramp of many steps in unison sounding as one.

"We must drop talk now," said Daniel, in a quiet voice.

So they turned silently from the dark river and set their faces towards the city which it filled with wealth and honor.

At the head of the steps Harold gave one glance again to the wonderful picture before him—the richest river in the world rushing up into the heart of the great city it nourishes, bearing on its broad breast the fruits of human toil in every land beneath the sun.

To the right a long belt of light crossed the darkness, defining the old quaint bridge now among the memories of the past, and above and below it were a thousand faint and twinkling gleams, shadowing to the mind's eye—not distinctly showing—the countless ships from whose dark shapes they sprang.

And amid all these lights, speaking, voiceless, of earth's cares and riches, sorrows and toil—the life and death of the world—there shone another, purer light, mingling among, but not of them—the light of stars, uttering in clear language a faithful message from other worlds beyond men's ken—worlds unknown and far away, but not too far to be unseen, or to be denied even by the scoffer who lives unbelieving and dies without hope.

From the river Harold turned his gaze upwards to the vast jewelled canopy, whose countless lights touched his heart with a sense of the mysterious infinity of life rolling, throbbing, burning through the immeasurable realms of space; and from that one glance, that one half-formed thought, he gathered courage.

How could he die when the great law of the universe was life? To lay down one existence was only a step to a higher and better one, and, if his death now—his passing from this world—gave to the woman he loved the peace, the calmness now so cruelly destroyed, surely he should not have died in vain.

But it was a time for action, not thought; and, as he walked on by Daniel's side, he strove to quell the feelings within him—the yearning of his heart for one touch of Estrild's soft hand, one look from her eyes that might assure him of her love and faith.

Through slums and courts, through narrow streets and foul alleys, sometimes finding silence and solitude, but often coming upon sights and sounds that filled the heart with a shuddering pity, they wended their way till they reached a flight of steps leading apparently into some dock or basin by the river-side. All was darkness here; but Harold heard the slush of water as he peered forward into the depth which lay below him.

It was here that Daniel stopped.

"Joe, my son, I take you no furder. You crouch down here in the shadow of the wall, and hould tight on to the dog. If you both keep still tongues in your heads, there bain't no fear of your being seen."

"You won't be long, uncle Dan?" asked Josiah. "I'd liefer be in a fight than be lonely."

"Keep your courage up, Joe," said Harold; "and don't forget to whistle if needs be. Now, Lion"—and he put his hand on the dog's head—"stand by him and guard him well till I come back. Would it not have been better, Daniel, if you had ordered the boat to come here for us?"

"Impossible, sir; as you'd see if 'twas daylight. There are docks and gates between us and the river."

"Do we go down these stairs?" Harold asked, in an amazed whisper, as he saw Daniel begin the descent.

"'Tis the sunly way, sir. Come on as quiet as you can."

Josiah heard the footfall of their steps a short way down the descent. Then all was silence, and no sound smote his ears save the slush of the unseen water that beat sluggishly against the steps.

At first the dog had made a bound forward to follow his master; but Joe, with arms round his neck, held him back by main force. Lion, too, had evidently understood Harold's last injunctions, and was but obeying a natural impulse in this one bound; for now, his conscience and reason checking him, he settled down to his duty with watchful eyes and ears alert to every sound.

"Good dog!" whispered Joe, caressing him. "Wag your tail, old fellow, as much as you've got a mind to, but keep your mouth closed."

Joe was ignorant of the fact that it is not a mastiff's way to let his whereabouts be known, like a mere cur, by barking.

So dog and boy, in dead silence, kept within the shadow of the high warehouse wall, and, shrouded in darkness, they saw unseen many ghastly figures of the night flit by—some in hunger and rags, voiceless in their misery, some drunken and raving, bawling coarse songs or quarrelling with slatternly women, or with their own reeling shadows.

The dog let them all pass by in silence, and seemed to sleep, as with half-closed eyes and massive jaw he lay with his head resting on Josiah's knee.

Half fearful and half enjoying his strange new position, the boy watched and wearied, and heard the clocks of distant churches chime the quarter to three.

Scarcely had the vibration died away on the dull, thick air, when Lion rose, and with head erect, stood as though scenting evil in the wind.

"Lie down, Lion!" whispered Joe.

But the next moment he started himself to his feet; for a man had suddenly come out of an archway on the opposite side, and, after looking furtively up and down the street, placed himself with back against the wall at right angles with Joe.

Here he waited, unconscious of any presence but his own, and after a moment he drew a small box from his pocket, and, putting it on the ground, knelt on one knee, and proceeded, with flint and steel, to procure himself a light for his pipe.

As these two old-world articles were struck together with a sharp click, a shower of sparks sprang from them, and one at last falling among the tinder in the box, ignited it. Then the man, bending low, blew into it, and a dull light was spread over his face, and Joe instantly recognized it as the face of the man whom he had seen in the boat that followed them from the Temple stairs.

It was an ill-looking face, of a low, cunning type, and Joe was glad that its owner's intentness on the difficult task of lighting a match in slow-burning and apparently damp tinder, had so completely absorbed his faculties that he neither perceived him nor the dog.

Taking advantage of his having to strike with flint and steel again—which he did with a growling accompaniment of ugly language—Joe, followed by Lion, stole cautiously down the steps, with such silent tread that he was unnoticed and unheard, the sharp clicking sound of the steel in the man's ears doubtless covering the slight rustle of his departure.

"He won't see us down here," thought Joe, as he descended the steps; "and, as they went this way, they must come back this way; so I sha'n't miss Dan'l and Mr. Oliver."

But here Joe stood still in dismay, for the steps appeared to lead only into the black and slimy water, whose slush was now reaching his feet. Turning back with a shiver of loathing and horror, he perceived that he had passed a low wooden gate or door, partly open and partly broken down.

In a moment he had reached it, and discovered that it was the entrance to a passage or underground-way, dark as a dungeon except for a glimmering light at the end, which flung a dull ray or two on the damp wall, showing that the passage made a sharp turn to the right.

Now, in an uneasy way, Lion put his nose to the ground, then raised his head with a low growl, and, bounding off, disappeared like a shadow beneath the dull lamp.

"Well, if he scents danger for his master," said Joe, looking after him wistfully, "I can't say it was mean of him to desart me. But it's lonesome, and I have a good mind to follow 'un."

But here his meditations were cut short by the sound of voices above.

"I hope you are quite sure of your man," some one was saying at the top of the steps.

"If I wasn't sure, I shouldn't be here," responded the same voice that had growled curses into the tinder-box.

"And how many fellows shall we find in this den?" asked the other, whom Joe thought talked like a gentleman.

"You'll find the deserter I informed against, and most likely two or three more—good sailors all of them."

"Well, when we get them—and I expect there'll be a fight first—you will have your blood-money—not before. In your dealings with me you'll have to be above board—no treachery, mind. I know this to be the most infamous crib in all the slums by the river."

"If it wasn't, seafaring men wouldn't hide in it."

"'Blood-money!—seafaring men!'"

Joe repeated these words in bewilderment while his heart beat fast and his face

grew hot. Then suddenly the truth struck him with a thrill of fear.

The man with the evil face was a base informer, and the other was an officer in charge of a press-gang. And Joe put his whistle to his lips, and blew it shrilly.

* * * * * *

When Daniel led the way through the damp and ugly passage, he paused at the turning where a dull oil lamp hung from a bracket in the wall.

"This is an underway used for loading and unloading ships," he said. "You see, it is mighty handy for rolling down casks. It's a handy way too for reaching the place we are going to, or for escaping from it," he added slowly. "We are carrying our lives in our hands, sir. If we betray ourselves, we shall be set upon—and they'd make short work of us. Men in hiding for their own lives don't stand upon ceremony with the lives of others."

"What sort of scamps are we likely to find here?" asked Harold.

"Deserters, mutineers, Lascars from East Indiamen, and scamps like this fellow, Trev L."

"Let us hurry on," said Harold, to whom the mention of this man's name brought a fever of haste.

After turning to the right the passage tended upward and brought them once more beneath the sky, though but a narrow strip; for they found themselves now in a sort of court surrounded on every side by tall, dark warehouses.

At one corner there was an outlet into an alley, along which there ran a wall, seemingly a dead wall without window and without door. Nevertheless on this wall Daniel knocked in a peculiar way; and after a short interval a sort of hatchway was opened above them, from which a grimy and hairy face protruded.

"Who's there?" asked a cautious, coarse voice.

"Sailors," responded Daniel, "wanting a hiding place for a few days, cumrasds."

"Men-o'-war's men?" demanded the head.

"Something like it," said Daniel, "and pay in our pockets."

The head retreated, the hatchway was shut; the wall was a blank again.

Harold's hopes fell.

"They won't admit us," he said to Daniel in a tone of dismay.

"Wait a bit, partner," returned Daniel, assuming another voice and manner.

"Now then!" said a sharp voice; and a trap-door was opened almost at their feet.

The rays of a lantern came up through it, but no one was visible, though a ladder was dimly seen.

As Harold descended, he put his hand on his pistol, and felt it was secure; and Daniel touch him on the shoulder with a touch that meant caution.

At the foot of the ladder stood a woman, handsome and yet repulsive, young and yet with the hardness of age on every line of her sharp face.

She led the way into a low room, in which five or six men sat drinking and smoking. A half-open door gave a peep of another room, more redolent still of evil smells, and in here men lay sleeping.

"New pals," said the woman shortly to the smokers.

One of them started up and stared at Daniel, while his bronzed face grew gradually as colorless as a tanned skin would permit.

"Hallos, Daniel! What are you in this lay for?"

"The old trade, Trevel—kegs, and too many of 'em."

Harold glanced at the man with a great heart-throb which rose even to his throat. There, hidden in that man's evil soul, lay the secret of Tristram's death. With a word he could clear up a mystery which, like a canker was poisoning Estrild's life and ruining his own.

Love, happiness—all that man holds dear—lay within the silence of this coarse and audacious ruffian.

"Kegs!" he repeated with a laugh not quite genuine. "Well, I thought sure, Dan'l, you were too old a bird to be cotched by a blind pup of a Preventive!"

"If I was cotched, I shouldn't be here," said Daniel sententiously.

"Well, they've seized the 'Curlew,' I reckon, of they haven't got the cap'n in the bilboes."

"There you are out of your reckoning, too," returned Daniel; "the 'Curlew' is safe and sound."

"Then why are you here—lurking and spying?" demanded Trevel, with a big oath. "Comrades"—and he turned to the other men who had been listening suspiciously to this short dialogue—"here is a teller who is sailing afore the wind—prosperous, mind you and no enemy in chase; and I votes we ax him what he's doing among honester men in wuss luck than hisself!"

A babel of tongues rose in answer; furious words and threats were flung around promiscuously, as if addressed to no one in particular, but to all traitors and spies in general.

Daniel stood his ground calmly; but Harold, whose hands were burning to seize Trevel by the throat, grew excited and angry.

"What is the use of further words?" he whispered in Daniel's ear. Let us lay hold of this scamp and drag him away with us at once."

"We should have a dozen knives in us in a minute if we tried such a hazardous game; and in two minutes more our bodies would be in the Thames," said Daniel, in the same low voice. "You know handy the river is."

"Speak up!" cried Trevel. "We don't want no plots hatched here in whispers."

"There a no plot 'cept axing each other what drink we should order for the company all round," said Daniel. "Please to say, gentlemen, what your liquor is, and I'm the man to pay for it."

This speech was received with the modified welcome usually given to the overtures of an enemy; nevertheless, it was by no means scorned or refused. And by the time each man had chosen the particular drink he affected, a better feeling was established between the old and new comrades.

Laughs and jokes went round, grim stories were told, in the midst of which one man fell asleep with his head on the table; another stretched himself on a bench and also slumbered.

Harold and Daniel exchanged glances; they had to deal now with three men only; one of these was Trevel. The time was come to carry out the plan on which they had resolved to act.

"We are a small company now," Daniel said, "and all friends; so I reckon I can speak without fear. Now I tell 'ee what it is, mess [companions]—me and my cumrade bain't here to hide nor to spy; we are on a bold ventur' for which we want men."

He made a slight pause, and looked round as if for an answer. To the minds of those to whom he spoke a venture meant some daring deed of smuggling, or even of piracy.

"And what's the pay if your men escape hanging?" demanded a young fellow who seemed an especial friend of Trevel's.

"First-rate pay, and a fair share of the profits."

The man laughed.

"A share of the risk and booty, and lots of fun in the lightning line, I expect! Well it would have suited me once, but not now;" and, putting down his glass with a sigh, he pulled up his sleeve, showing a shriveled arm, like a skeleton's. "Smashed in a door in escaping, after something I'm wanted badly for," he added, as, taking up the glass again, he drank the contents at a gulp. "You must look further, friend; a broken man is only good for—what I shall one day get—hanging."

Harold was silent from pity; but Trevel laughed.

"Hark to him now!" he said. "That's how he goes on in his dismal fits; but he's a devil when his blood's up."

Here the man who sat near Harold bent forward and whispered to him:

"Was a mate once—jealousy—shot his wife and her lover; and, by ——, served 'em right too! Are you the boss of this ventur'?"

"Yes," said Harold eagerly; "my life is staked on it; and I'll pay any money to get my man—or men," he added, mending his speech hastily.

"Well, I'll join if all's fair and aboveboard. Now cousin Jacky"—and he turned to Trevel—"what do you say? Shall we leave this blind ould den, where we are boozing our lives away, and get out on the briny water wounce more?"

"Well, it won't suit me," said Trevel slowly. "I do know the sea too well; I've had enough of salt junk and hard tack; and, moreover, I mistrusts Dan'l. He's a pilot; and he edn't the man to go on a ventur'."

"I didn't say it were my ventur'," said Daniel.

"No; it is mine," said Harold; "and I'll pay well."

"Yours?" sneered Trevel. "You don't look like it neither. You've the look of a man-o'-war's man, who ought to have swabs on his shoulders, ready to cut a Frenchee's throat for pay and glory; but not so ready to hand him honest coin for good brandy. No; I ain't to be took in by neither one of 'ee, nor by your soft sawder nor by your liquor—there now!"

"Then what should we come here for?" asked Daniel boldly, "if not for men we want?"

"How can I say?" replied Trevel, whose brain was now touched by drink. "Folks often have plans in their heads which they don't tell of. I may have waun myself. I may have a better ventur' on hand than yours, and waun which will bring me a slight deal more money, and no risk," he added, with a drunken laugh. "Anyhy let my slipping off without leave from the 'Alert' be forgot so that I can slip away from here, and that rottin ould bark shall bring me a fortin' yet."

On hearing these words Harold's caution broke down. He started up and seized Trevel's collar in a firm grip, and called upon Daniel to help him.

An indescribable uproar followed—a mingling of oaths and smashing of glass, the commencement of a battle which had not time to strike a blow, for in the very instant the fray began it was quelled.

At the first sound of the coming fight the woman who had stood by the trap door was among them. She was furious, and yet calm; she looked all around her with steely, cold, relentless eyes.

"You know my rule," she said, in her hard, thin voice—"no fighting allowed. I pay the watch to keep away from this place, and I pay them to come when I want them. The signal which calls them is always ready. If I hear another sound I will raise it."

She vanished through the low doorway by which she had entered; and the men, after an instant's silence, began to praise her.

"A woman to keep her word, no end of grit in her, and handsome as a pictur'."

"Handsome?" said Daniel. "Why, she have got a jaw like a sarpint, and an eye like an alligator, and a thin greedy mouth like a wolf's."

"So she have," said the drunken, sleepy man, raising his head from the table; "and them three things would take in any man here."

"And give a woman her own way, even though lives went down afore her," said Trevel's friend.

"Well, she's missus here," said a third; "and there's lives in her hand now—and lives on her head too—of men she have given up."

"So she does that sometimes?" Harold said.

"Yes," returned the other in a whispered, frightened voice; "when it's worth more to sell a man than to keep him, she will do it."

By this time Trevel had reached the whimpering stage of drink; he was a victim, an ill-used man.

"Look here, Dan'l," he said in an aggrieved tone, "I ax 'ee whether or no you reckon it a fair thing to bring a swell in here as a man-o'-war's man to lay hold o' me?"

"Fair enough of he wants you badly and pays you well."

"Let 'un keep his money in his purse; I don't want none of it. My ventur' is better nor his any day. And, if I hadn't took French leave, I'd go to the Admiralty tomorrow, and tell them there that Cap'en Armstrong wrecked his ship a-purpose; so I should get money both sides. But I knowed which I'd pay best; my brains was in my head when I slipped out of the ould 'Alert.'"

"But your brains bain't in your head now, Trevel, else you'd come along with me and my pal. You'd be safe out of harm's way. You'll be hanged as a deserter if cotched—mind that. And you'll put more money in your pocket than any ventur' of your own can ever bring 'ee."

"That's more than you do know," returned Trevel, in a drunken tone of swagger. "Maybe I can get folks hanged 'stead of being hanged myself; and a rich man will pay a deal to get the rope off his neck."

"But what if my friend will pay more to put it on him?" said Daniel slowly. Name your sum, Trevel, like a man, and make an end of it."

Trevel grew pale; for a moment he looked as if some great shock had sobered him.

"Do you mean," he said, "that your cumrade knows something 'bout the matter I've took in hand?"

"Yes, I mean that."

"Well, I'm darned!"

And, leaning back against the wall without a word more, Trevel wiped the perspiration which had begun to stream from his forehead.

"Think it over," continued Daniel, in the same low voice—"money and safety. For, arter making a clean breast of what's on your mind, I'd run the 'Curlew' out to sea, and put 'ee in a fregatt I know on flying the stars and stripes; and with thic flag ovver your head, I reckon even a British cap'n would think twice before axing for 'ee."

For a moment Trevel's muddled brain seemed to grasp this idea with pleasure, for a smile broke over his face.

"I reckon you ain't far wrong," he said, in the slow, deliberate voice of a man who feels that drink is fast stealing his senses. "And, if your cumrade had kept his hands off me—— Hallos, where is he gone?" he added, looking around with sudden scared eyes.

Daniel rose from his chair in anxiety. Harold was not in the room.

"Where's my friend?" he asked uneasily of the pale man with the shriveled arm.

"In there talking to her," he answered, pointing to the low door in the wall. "She always pleases new-comers," he added, with a laugh.

Daniel glanced at the door with misgiving at his heart; he resolved to enter the inner room, and had made one step forwards, when the woman emerged from it, followed by Harold.

She walked straight up to Trevel, and confronted him with a steadfast face.

"I advise you to accept the offer that has been made you," she said, in a quiet, hard voice.

Trevel was too tipsy now to be afraid even of this human tigress.

"Do you, ma'am?" he said, shaking his head, with an attempt at a leer. "But I bain't of the same mind. I mean to bide here 'long with you, till the fog clears, and then I sets sail for my own port."

"You are mistaken," she answered—and her thin, cruel voice made the man's heart quiver—"you will not stay another instant here. You have always been a troublesome fellow, ready to fight and quarrel at a word. I keep no such scamps in my peaceable house. You know your way out of it. There it lies; and she pointed to the door. "Take it."

Trevel's face was ghastly with rage and fear. He rose, shaking in every limb; his quivering lips, rising over his teeth, could scarce form the words he uttered.

"So you've sold me, you she-fiend! But I don't leave this house for nothing!"

As he spoke, fumbling secretly in his pocket, he had unclasped a huge knife, and now, with this open in his hand, he sprang on Harold, and made a furious lunge at his breast. The next instant, with his hand still in the air, he was pinned to the floor, and the teeth of a huge mastiff were on his throat.

"That's a good dog," coolly remarked the woman. "I thought he belonged to you, when he dashed through the trap when I opened it a minute ago. He has saved your life this time. Take your man away. You three are strong enough to do it."

"You are reckoning without me," said the pale man with the shriveled arm. "They don't touch him."

The woman's scorn was ineffable.

"You!" she said with withering contempt. "I don't reckon with such as you! Perhaps you'll go with him?"

"I will," he answered, white with fury.

"Then I'll come to see you hanged," the woman said, in her coolest voice. "It will be a pretty sight. Call off your dog," she added, turning to Harold—"he's choking your man, and you want him living—don't you?—not dead."

"Let him go, Lion."

The huge mastiff obeyed his master with the silence of his race, and Trevel, cowed, livid, and shaken, rose slowly. At this moment a tall, old-fashioned clock in the room, after a preliminary gasp and rattle, began to strike three.

"Hold your man!" whispered the woman, "and look to your own lives! I can do no more!"

She had drawn Harold aside to whisper this, and now, approaching to table, she said, in her thin incisive voice—

"I break my rules for no man. All lights out at three o'clock!" and instantly her sudden quick hand darted out from under her shawl, and extinguished the oil-lamp standing on the table.

The room was plunged in darkness. But at the very moment that Harold had perceived her intent, he and Daniel seized Trevel, and held him firmly, standing one on each side of him.

"If you move a muscle," said Harold quietly, "the dog will be on your throat again. I want nothing from you but the truth, and no harm shall befall you."

"You had best come along paiceably, my son," observed Daniel, in his blandest voice, "or I shall have to knock 'ee down, and drag 'ee along a bit rough maybe."

He and Harold had spoken and acted simultaneously, and now both drew Trevel towards the third door in the room, which opened into a short passage in which the ladder stood leading to the trap-door.

Either their intention had not for a moment been divined, or the surprise of darkness had bewildered the ruffians around them, for no attempt was made to hinder them in their design till, gasping and struggling, Trevel yelled out—

"Look to yourselves, men; your lives will be sold next! Will you stand by like cowards, and see me murdered?"

A volley of oaths answered him; then the sound of uncertain steps, mingling with voices cursing the darkness, rushed upon the fugitives as they hurried Trevel to the foot of the ladder.

Daniel mounted first, and hauled the man up after him as if he were a bale of goods, helpless in his strong hand. Harold followed, but had scarcely ascended half-way, when, with a yell of fury, some lithe creature sprang on him and dragged him backwards with one hand.

It was the man with the shrivelled arm. His one useful hand had a grip of iron; the setting of his teeth could be heard as he knit them together in his fury.

"You don't carry off my friend and leave me alive, you miserable spy and traitor!" he said.

"Kill him!" cried Trevel; "knife him at once!"

But the man had but one hand he could use; to get at any weapon, if he had one, he must let Harold go; so he hesitated, and in that moment lost his chance.

Daniel's strong grasp was on him and flung him aside like a reed. Harold rose bewildered and breathless, and saw that he had lifted the trap-door and hurled Trevel outside, and then sprung from the ladder to his aid.

Even at this moment of peril, weak and scarce able to breathe through that relentless hold on his throat, Harold thought of but one terror.

"Trevel will escape!" he almost gasped forth.

"Come and see!" cried Daniel, dragging him up the ladder by main force.

"Help, help!" shrieked the man, whose rage had turned him into a maniac, as, throwing himself on the ladder, he first strove to shake it from its fastening, and, failing in this, he seized Harold by the ankle and held on like grim death.

This did not affect Daniel; he hauled them both up without any apparent effort; as though the second man hanging on the strength of his hand were a mere fly.

But, as he reached the open trap-door and safety, there was a shout, a rush of many feet, a flash of light, and five or six ruffians were upon them. A dozen hands were stretched out to seize them and drag them down to death, when a piercing whistle rang through the air, and the cursing, raging crowd staggered backwards as if struck powerless by a blow or the fall of a thunderbolt.

Daniel, knowing that it was Joe's whistle, took instant advantage of the sudden consternation which had turned them into helpless cowards, and, pulling Harold with him, he sprang through the opening on to the firm ground.

For an instant ere he closed the trap-door he caught a glimpse of scared eyes staring upwards, the dull, red light of a single candle flaring in them; he saw the set hard face of the woman coming towards them, and the dead-white face of the man who had clung to Harold falling backwards from the ladder. Then the trap went down and shut it all from his sight.

Trevel was on the ground, and the dog, panting and with eyes of fire, stood with two huge paws on his chest, holding him down, yet not touching him with the bristling teeth over which his lip was raised.

"Well done, Lion!" and Harold drew a great breath of relief as, patting the dog on the head, he helped his trembling prisoner to rise.

"Come on, sir!" cried Daniel, "there's danger in the wind. Joe haven't whistled for nothing!" and catching Trevel, now subdued and helpless, by the arm, he hurried him onwards.

At a running pace, he and Harold holding him on either side, they dashed through the court, reached the underground way, and rushed down its dark slope.

But near a sharp angle where it turned to the river a breathless figure met them, and flung itself before them with outstretched arms. The light of the lamp in the wall showed them Joe's face white with fear.

"Turn back!" he cried, "and run for your lives! The press-gang be on us! Oh, Lord, they be here—you're too late!"

And, clinging to Daniel, the boy fell forward with a sob of terror, as the measured tramp of feet broke upon the stillness with a horror like the closeness of death.

CHAPTER XXVII.

GRADUALLY the great city woke to life as the dim light from its dim sky proclaimed to the human hive within it that another day had risen on their toil. Down by the river-side the waifs and strays who, like a ragged fringe, line its shore began their daily work of snatching from the tide the unsavory refuse or the battered, broken objects which it wash flung upon the slime.

Michael, sitting in his boat, watched these dim figures as they flitted to and fro in the gray dawn, wandering purposeless—as it seemed to him—on the unsightly shore, or with a sudden rush, clutching at some shapeless thing floating towards the mud, rejected by the river.

He wondered at them in his country mind, so full of memories of clear skies glorious sea, and flowery land; and his thoughts flitted round their hazy figures, not comprehending their hard, unlovely eyes, and yet pitying them.

To him they seemed to rise from the mud itself, as, in little groups of two or three, they sprang upon his vision, suddenly looming from out the fog or semi-darkness like weird creatures on the borderland beyond humanity, or like lost spirits wandering on the outskirts of a world that refused them a shelter.

"Do 'em slaip here, I wonder, 'pon the mud," he said to himself, "or somewheres in the dirt? Have 'em got a plaace they caals home? Well, I'd sooner live down by the sea on haaf malt than up here in Lun'on church-town among baistliness, and whisht living bones walking round in rags, hungering arter things thic the pigs wouldn't wrastle for. Bless us, what have 'em catched hould of now? And squabbling over it, too, they be!"

Here Michael raised his voice and accosted the group of urchins who were fighting over some object which one of them held tightly clasped.

"What have 'ee got there, my son? I'll give 'ee sixpence for it, whatever it be."

The mellow, coaxing, Cornish voice touched their ears with an unwonted sound; for an instant the struggle was suspended, and Michael was answered civilly:

"It's worth more than sixpence, sir. But you shall have it for a bob!"

Then came a clamor of tongues.

"It isn't 'is; tis mine!" said one.

"No, 'tis Jack's," said another; "he seed it fust! Don't you pay 'im nothing, sir!"

"Bring it along," cried Michael, "and I'll see fair among you all!"

"'Ere you are, sir!"—and with a rush four boys were in the water, clutching at the gunwale of the boat, while a fifth, with sharp and anxious eyes upon his enemies, handed him a sailor's hat.

Michael took it in his hand, and his heart, with a great bound, struck him with a sudden faintness, and his face grew deathly white.

The hat was his own—the one he had loaned to Harold.

"Was it in the river?" he asked brokenly.

"Yes, sir—floated in; I cotched it, sir. I seed it fust, sir. It's mine, sir!"

And the babel of tongues began again, mingled with a few cuffs, and curses not a few.

"Hould your noise, all of 'ee," Michael said, "and you shall have money all round."

He drew some coppers from his pocket and flung them ashore, and in a moment the urchins were down in the mud struggling and scratching for them, except the boy who had drawn the hat to land, and him Michael held in a firm grip while he made him relate minutely how and where he had found his prize.

"Do you often find hats floating about here?" he asked.

"Old ones throwed away, but not good ones like that, 'cept when folks is drowned—we finds 'em then."

Michael's heart fell again.

"Where do the Lord Mayor live, my son? Can 'ee tell me?"

"At the Mansion House. Things in the river don't belong to he."

Here a shout arose from the shore, and the boys, who had picked up all the pence, made a rush towards some large object which, now appearing, now disappearing, came rolling onwards with the rising tide.

"I do believe 'tis a man drownded!" cried the boy, with eager delight, whom Michael was still holding. "Let go of me—let go I say!"

And, tearing his rags from Michael's grasp, he rushed away after his companions. Again and again they dashed into the river knee-deep, regardless of wet or cold or danger, as, with shouts and eager eyes and outstretched hands, they strove to reach the dimly seen object which ever eluded their grasp.

Meanwhile Michael, with a misgiving heart and thoughts full of black fears, had brought his boat near the helpless drowned creature, which floated now on, now under the tide.

It was curious to see how the rolling waves gave to its dead helplessness a kind of life as they carried it swiftly away from the many attempts Michael made to seize it.

The boys on the shore watched him with angry eagerness and hungry cries for a share in the booty. And then, with a great shout, as at last he clutched it with boat-hook and dragged it from the water—

"Why, it's only a dog!" they cried with a laugh of fierce disappointment. Yes, it was only a dog. It was the noble mastiff, Lion, with a bullet through his brain.

* * * * * *

"I am sorry I can't help you," said the magistrate to Michael. "The watchman informs me that a press-gang was out last night, impressing sailors; so perhaps your friends have been carried off to the fleet at Sheerness."

"Is that the law? Can 'em do such things as impress a gentleman and a pilot who's cap'n of his own boat?" asked Michael.

"If a gentleman chooses to disguise himself as a sailor, he must take the consequences of his folly. He'll prove his identity and free himself in time no doubt. As for the pilot, they'll keep him. His Majesty's Fleet must be manned, and it is greatly in need of seamen. Most likely a pilot will be useful as they go down Channel, and their's just a chance of their setting him ashore at Portsmouth, or Falmouth, or somewhere. As a rule, press-gangs leave pilots unmolested—unless they want them," added the magistrate blandly.

Angry to his very soul, Michael turned away, feeling sick at heart, seeing plainly that no help could be given him against cruel laws and worse customs.

The uncertainty of his uncle's and Harold's fate had filled him with a great heartache. It was almost a relief to think of them as impressed and not drowned, as he had feared.

Perhaps the hat had fallen into the river in the fight—for there had been a fight he felt sure—and doubtless poor Lion had lost his life in the battle while defending his master.

"They needn't have killed the gentleman's dog!" he said angrily to the magistrate.

"Ah, a savage animal no doubt?" that gentleman replied. "A press-gang would be sure to make short work of him. Now, my man, as you are a sailor yourself, I advise you to go home unless you wish to serve in his Majesty's Fleet. Press-gangs are about every night, and seamen are greatly wanted."

"I'd wrastle the whole lot for a new hat if I had them in Cornwall!" said Michael savagely. "Ah, and I'd win it, too!" I reckon they understand a Cornish hug afore the wrastling was over!"

There was a laugh, a call for some drunkard, who appeared between two constables, with straws in his hair, and face streaked with mud and battered with bruises, and Michael found himself set aside as a case that was done with.

Sorrowfully he went back to the "Curlew", revolving many schemes in his mind that fell to pieces as useless, even as he built them up.

Foremost was hope that the Fleet, which had sailed that morning from Sheerness, might, after availing itself of Daniel's services, set him ashore at Falmouth.

As for Joe, his was a hopeless case; no admiral on the surface of the sea, having once got a hold of such a boy, would let him go again. But there was comfort in the fact that Joe was a younster who always fell on his feet.

So his darkest thoughts revolved round Herold's fate, and he examined the hat with careful scrutiny, as if he expected to find a solution of his doubts within its lining.

"It's a fust rate hat still," said Michael to himself; "and a man wouldn't lose a hat like that while he had any use for one. A drowned man don't want a hat!"

Giving his thoughts words doubled the horror of it, and he thrust the hat out of his sight with a sickly sort of forced laugh that made his lips grow white.

And he was soon aboard the "Curlew" and flying down the river seeking her true home on the sea.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Bric-a-Brac.

EARLY SIGNATURES.—In the early days only a few scholars and priests knew how to write. It was then customary to sign a document by smearing the hand with ink and impressing it upon the paper, at the same time saying, "Witness my hand." Afterward the seal was introduced as a substitute for the hand mark, the two forming the signature. This is the origin of the expression used in modern documents.

HAND-SHAKING.—The origin of hand-shaking is thus given by some writers: In early and barbarous times, when every savage, or semi-savage, was his own lawgiver, judge, soldier and policeman, and had to watch over his own safety, in default of all other protection—when two friends or acquaintances, or two strangers desiring to be acquaintances, chanced to meet they offered each to the other the right hand alike of offence and defence, the hand that wielded the sword, the dagger, the club, tomahawk or other weapons of war.

SEA-BIRDS AND WATER.—The often asked question, "Where do sea-birds obtain fresh water to slake their thirst?" is answered by an old skipper, who says that "he has frequently seen these birds far away from any land that could furnish them water, hovering around and under a storm-cloud, chattering like ducks on a hot day at a pond, and drinking in the drops of rain as they fell. They will smell a rain squall a hundred miles or even farther off; and send for it with inconceivable swiftness. They can go a long time without water."

SNEEZING.—An amusing account of the ceremonies which attend the sneezing of a King of Monomotopa, shows what a national concern may be the sneeze of despotism. Those who are near his person when this happens, salute him in so loud a tone that persons in the antechamber hear it and join in the acclamation; in the adjoining apartments they do the same, till the noise reaches the street, and becomes propagated throughout the city; so that at each sneeze of his majesty, results a most horrid cry from the salutations of many thousands of his vasals. When the King of Senaar sneezes, his courtiers immediately turn their backs on him, and give a loud slap on their right thigh. With the ancients sneezing was ominous; from the right it was auspicious; and Plutarch, in his life of Themistocles, says, that before a naval battle it was a sign of conquest.

THE CONQUEROR OF JERUSALEM.—The Jewish detestation of Titus, their great conqueror, appears by the following invention: They tell us that on sea Titus tauntingly observed in a great storm that the God of the Jews was only powerful on the water, and that, therefore, he had succeeded in drowning Pharoah and Sisra. "Had he been strong he would have waged war with me in Jerusalem." On uttering this blasphemy, a voice from heaven said: "Wicked Man! I have a little creature in the world which shall wage war with thee!" When Titus landed, a gnat entered his nostrils, and for seven years together made holes in his brains. When the skull was opened the gnat was found as large as a pigeon: the mouth of the gnat was of copper and the claws of iron.

THE HEART.—The heart in poetry and romance is spoken of as the seat of love. One almost hesitates to profane such sacred beliefs with the hint that they are one and all false to nature; yet such is the hard fact. The heart is not the source or seat of the emotions; it is, on the contrary, one of the most prosaic, although most vital, organs of the body. It is simply a hollowed-out muscle, which expands to receive the blood from the veins, and contracts to propel it again through the arteries. It is merely a natural pump, very wonderful and perfect in its structure and mechanism, but still concerned in no higher function than the purely mechanical one of regulating the supply of blood to the various organs of the body. The heart does not feel emotion. It does not warm with love, or burn with hate, or melt with pity, as the poets have so long assured us, and as so many familiar and popular expressions imply. All these emotions have their seat in the brain.

IN San Francisco there are four journals regularly published in Chinese characters. These appear weekly, and have a circulation of 2500 copies. According to the Chinese method a good printer can print 400 sheets a day. Five days' work is required to get out an edition of 1000 copies. The journals are printed with black ink upon single sheets of white paper.

THE LAND OF YESTERDAY.

BY A. L. B.

Far in the West, beyond the setting sun,
Beyond the waves that glow like molten gold,
There lies an island; and, when day is done
And we gaze o'er the waters, we behold
Its calm green meadows and clear winding streams
And purple hills that seem to touch the sky;
But over all there hangs a mist of dreams,
Scarce lifted by the breeze that seems a sigh,
And never voice comes from the Silent Shore,
But whispers sounds and songs of days of yore.

The Isle is called the Land of Yesterday:
And there are buried human hopes and fears,
And joys and sorrows—ay, and hearts, they say,
That have been broken in this world of tears!
And you and I have each our treasures there,
And stretch out yearning hands towards the shore,
And long to wander in the meadows fair,
And sweet loved paths we knew in days of yore;
But the chill mist hangs o'er the farther side,
And sounds of weeping float across the tide.

Alas, we never, never more may stand
Again within the Land of Yesterday—
Never may hope to clasp with eager hand
The days that were too bright, too sweet to stay!
But, lest our sinking hearts should die,
There comes the promise of a dawn so bright
That all the mists and all the gloom will fly,
And all the sorrow pass in golden light,
And God Himself in heav'n's most glad "For aye"
Restores our treasures lost in Yesterday.

Pride For Pride.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CUPID IN SCARLET," "NINE PEAS IN A POD," "PRIDE," "THE GHOST OF AN OLD LOVE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER V.

THE sun which shone over Saxongore the following morning was only a sickly winter one; but he did his work very bravely, in spite of various hindrances in the form of clouds and east winds.

He flooded the cosy hall and the wide stairs of time-polished oak with a very brilliant gleam.

He lingered upon Lu-Lu's slim figure in its morning-gown of crimson cashmere and satin; he kissed her slender hand, as it slid easily down the shining hand-rail, and hung in ecstasy over the great single-stone diamond ring shining on the finger so soon to wear the magic circle of plain gold which would change the whole current of her life.

She descended the stairs very slowly—indeed, except in very extraordinary circumstances, her movements were not distinguished for liveliness, always taking exception to those of her tongue, which upon occasion could be wonderfully quick—it was a habit of hers, in going up or down, contracted because the stairs at Saxongore, like those of many another house, were the best place for singing in, except the billiard-room.

Lu-Lu was singing at that moment—not particularly that she felt in a singing mood, but because from the upper gallery she had seen Alan a-Dale lying comfortably in her rocking-chair, swaying himself patiently to and fro in front of the blazing fire.

Instantly her rich voice rang out through the house in the first song that came into her head.

"'Gad, what a voice the girl has!" said Alan a-Dale to himself, with lazy enjoyment.

"If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf,
Our lives should grow together
In sad or singing weather,
Blown fields or flowerful closes,
Green pleasure or gray grief—
If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf."

"Never heard her singing like that before!" quoth Alan to the fire, as Lu-Lu reached the second gallery, and her voice rang out very much con passione.

If love—were what the rose is, and I—were like—the leaf."

There was just a moment's pause before she began again—this time in the most soft, tender voice imaginable.

"If I were what the words are,
And love were like the tune,
With double sound and single
Delight our lips would mingle,
With kisses glad as birds are
That get sweet rain at noon—
If I were what the words are,
And love were like the tune."

"And love—were like—the tune! Oh, is that you, Alan? You are over early this morning," she remarked, in her usual careless tone of bonhomie.

"Glad to find you in such good spirits, my dear," he answered, holding out his hand and pulling a second modern chair forward for her. "You know, if you were in love with me, you'd be upstairs crying your eyes out and making yourself hideous."

"Oh, no, I shouldn't!" she said, taking the chair, with a smile at his ignorance. "When brides cry, it's all make-believe."

"Umph!" remarked Alan doubtfully. "Well, I've brought the jewels over—the fellow got here at two this morning. Rather a close shave that—eh? Really, though, they have been unworn so long that they were bound to be cleaned up, though we haven't had time to get them re-set."

"I didn't know there were any jewels," she said, lifting the lid of the case. "Oh, they are splendid, Alan!"—perceiving a suite of gold ornaments set with sapphires—the locket bearing her initials. "I'm sure they will not need re-setting—they look quite new!"

"Oh, those are new!" he laughed. "Those are my wedding-present to you, my darling."

"I will wear them to-day then," she declared impulsively, almost forgetting that Friendship was supposed to be in the ascendency over Love.

"Hadn't you better wear the family jewels?" he asked doubtfully. "Oh, just as you like, of course! You know which is the most proper."

"You see my dress is not white," she began.

"You know best. Where are the others?" he asked.

"Gone to breakfast," she replied, suddenly remembering that Love was nowhere. "Where we must go too, for we have not much time"—rising as she spoke and shutting the case.

"Yes; but wait a moment; I've something to say to you," he said nervously, and rising also. "I wanted to tell you, Lu, how very grateful I am to you for all you've done for me."

"Oh, it is nothing," answered Lu-Lu hurriedly. "I don't mind at all, Alan; in fact, I rather enjoy getting married."

"Oh, it's awfully good of you to say so!" he said, almost humbly. "For I know you really hate it; but, believe me, Lu, I shall never interfere with your liberty. You shall do exactly as you like in everything, and really I don't think we need be unhappy or anything of that sort."

"I shall not be unhappy," declared Lu-Lu, in a very low voice, and with an impulse strong upon her to fling her arms about him and pray him to love her just a little.

"It must have been Jack Harley, after all," cried a bright voice above, followed by a light foot-fall on the stairs. "Oh, you may scurry off to the dining-room as hard as you like. But I saw you. I believe Alan was just going to——"

"Yes, I was," put in Alan promptly. "I'll do it now, if Lu has no objection."

"Oh, please do not!" said Lu hastily, and raising her hand to ward him off.

Looking at her more closely, he saw that her eyes were filled with tears; yet no suspicion of the truth entered his mind; he only thought how in truth the dear old girl hated the coming ceremony; and so thoroughly did he feel for her that he almost detested himself for being the cause of forcing it upon her.

"To think I was wrong," laughed Ella, as she took her seat, "and that it really was Jack Harley, after all! What was his costume, Alan?"

It was not Alan, but Lu-Lu, who answered to this challenge, and she couched her reply in such terms that not only Ella, but the whole of the assembled party were left absolutely breathless—gaping blankly in one another's faces.

"There, there, Ella—that will do!" she said, with authoritative tartness. "For goodness sake, let that fly stick by the wall!"

As might reasonably be expected, the effect was magical; they were all too thoroughly astounded to speak or even to laugh.

Mrs. Athelstane, with very large eyes, began a remonstrative "My dar-ling child!" and Alan, having fully grasped the situation, burst into a prolonged roar of laughter.

"Thank you, father; I'll take some pie," said Lu-Lu coolly. "Does any one care to see the jewels Alan came to bring this morning?"

"He's over head and ears," quoth Ella, as the lid was lifted.

"I say, Ella," laughed Alan; "you know what I threatened yesterday, and you know as well as I do what it will lead to if I carry it out. If Gervase and I fall foul of one another, I shall turn him into a cocked hat in no time—so, for your own sake, just keep that sharp Athelstane tongue quiet."

"Poor Lu-Lu!" sighed Ella dolefully to the ceiling. "What a prospect she has before her!"

Her remark however was lost to the company in general, for the contents of the jewel-case attracted the attention of every one present.

"Which do you intend to wear, to-day, my dear, asked Mr. Athelstane, pausing in the examination with a great rope of pearls in her hands.

"Oh, the sapphires!" Lu-Lu answered, with a vivid flush.

And her mother stifled a sigh, knowing well that she would wear Alan's gift for love of the giver, and not because, as she added half-apologetically, they would match her dress. Since the dress was entirely amethyst-colored velvet, sapphires could scarcely be considered a "match".

"I have given you nothing, Alan," said Lu-Lu, under cover of the general hubbub around them.

As the words passed her lips, she thought how, in different circumstances, he would have been quick to tell her, with a tender touch and smile, that she had given him herself, a gift of matchless value.

But no such words passed Alan a-Dale's lips. Had they crossed his mind, he would have forborne to utter them. Was not the "old girl" always so sadly impatient of anything like sentiment?

And so his answer, though kind and tender and grateful, smote her like a keen blow by the very friendliness of its accent; it was as if she had asked him for bread, being starving, and he had given her a stone—a valuable, precious gem, no doubt, but not the stay of life that she craved. She wanted love, and he gave her friendship.

"You have given me what I value most upon earth," he said quietly; "and for that gift I owe you a debt of honor which will last all my life. You shall never feel the loss of your liberty, if I can help it, Lu."

How could she tell him, in the midst of that noisy party that she wished to feel the loss of her so-called liberty? How could she cry out that she would glory in being his slave, if he would only have her?

Had they been alone, her bursting heart might have found itself a voice, and told him all; as it was, the presence of others kept her silent, and the opportunity went by.

It was a long, long time before she again saw that gleam of deepest gratitude shining in the blue depths of Alan a-Dale's eyes.

And presently she went away to dress, though she did not go straight to her room; she lingered a few moments in the library, in the half-hope that Alan might come in alone.

Her hope was realized, for, two minutes after her, he entered.

"Oh, are you here?" he said pleasantly. "I thought you had gone to adorn. I came in to write the letter to Greenway—the certificate had better go to-day; don't you think so?"

"Certainly; it cannot be settled too soon," she answered gravely. "Here are materials. I was waiting here, hoping you might come. I want to say something which I could not say before all those people."

"Yes, what is it?" he asked absently, looking from the paper upon which he had already written "Dear Mr. Greenway."

Lu-Lu moved a step nearer to him. She felt that a moment had come which might prove the turning-point of her whole life.

"I am not unduly given to sentiment, Alan," she began nervously.

"By Jove, no; you're far too sensible!" he interrupted, leaning back in his chair and slipping the big ring up and down her slender finger.

"But I am rather superstitious," she went on, gaining courage from the caress, which, slight as it was, was wonderful for him. "And I've a kind of feeling that we shall have no luck, if—if we——"

"Oh, I beg a thousand pardons!" exclaimed Mrs. Athelstane's voice at the door, which he immediately slammed to.

"Confound it!" said Alan testily, really annoyed at the interruption.

Lu-Lu however mistook the cause of his annoyance, thinking it was because they had been surprised in an attitude nearly approaching to the sentimental, and moved towards the door.

"What were you saying?" he asked, rising, and following her. "Something about our good luck. If there is any ceremony to perform, we must on no account omit it."

"Never mind. I must go, I have no time," said the girl coldly. "Good-bye for the present, and keep up your courage, when the plunge comes."

She laid her hand upon the door; but Alan detained her.

"Wait a moment; I'm not given to sentiment any more than yourself; but you must give me a kiss before you go. We are sure to be horribly unlucky if you don't."

She half laughed and put up her hand to keep him at arm's length—in truth, she was afraid of betraying herself.

Alan, however, had his strong foot against the door in a moment, and drew her to him, with laughter-lit blue eyes, and a gay smile on his mouth.

For one moment he held her prisoned close against the heart she yearned so to possess, looking straight down into the troubled dear eyes which he had never taken the pains to examine so closely before.

He didn't want to marry any one! He was as nearly angry with his uncle as he could be with a dead man, whom he had loved so dearly, and to whom he owed so much; but, after all, Alan a-Dale was not a man of marble, and Lu-Lu Athelstane was a remarkably pretty girl, who had always been his fast friend and favored companion; so it was not very surprising that, with all his much-talked-about distaste for love-making, he bestowed half-a-dozen as hearty kisses upon her pretty countenance as ever any man did on earth on any woman.

"I'm beginning to think the spoony chaps know what they are about after all!" he said laughingly. "If I wasn't so awfully afraid of your laughing at me or being angry, I believe I should be falling in love with you. There now—don't look so scornful!" he ended.

How stupid he was to mistake the shining light in those soft brown orbs for anything but the true love of a kind and tender woman!

In another moment, but for the tears that flooded to her eyes and the great lump that crept up in her throat, she would have answered. As it was, ere she could recover from her emotion and her surprise, the door opened, and Mrs. Athelstane rustled into the room.

"What are you doing here?" she demanded.

"My dear Mrs. Athelstane," audaciously returned Alan, "I have been making the most violent love to my wife. I hope you don't disapprove of that."

"Not at all. Your attitude relieved my mind greatly," she answered, touching his hand caressingly with her own. "But it is half-past ten, and Lu-Lu must be thinking of dressing."

"Yes, yes, I will go," said Lu-Lu, finding her voice at last. "By-bye, Alan."

"Make yourself look as pretty as ever you can!" he shouted after her. "I think I too must go and dress," he added to Mrs. Athelstane.

"I want to say one word to you first," she said seriously. "You will take care of my child, Alan?"

Alan bent down and kissed her, quite as heartily as he kissed her daughter two minutes before.

"You may trust me," he answered, in a tone which somehow brought the tears into the lady's eyes.

* * * * * *

"With this ring, I thee wed; with my body, I thee worship; and with all my worldly goods I thee endow."

The solemn words of promise sounded through the old church, first in the Rector, Mr. Avogarth's strong sonorous voice, then in Alan's firm unfaltering tones.

Lu-Lu lifted her brown eyes to his just as the second pledge passed his lips—"With my body I thee worship!"

The hand holding hers clasped it a little closer, and into his blue eyes there came a gleam which she knew meant quizzical fun.

Her own sank, and she looked up no more until the conclusion of the ceremony.

Nor did she lift them even then, for it was Mrs. Athelstane, not Alan, who claimed the first kiss, and even in her pain Lu-Lu had sufficient presence of mind to hide the woe which must, she felt, be filling her eyes.

The rest was soon over; there were the two signatures side by side—"Alan a-Dale, Adela Bulstrode Athelstane."

Alan laughed a soft little laugh as he saw the second.

"How odd it looks!" he said, as he bent over her. "I think I shall make a practice of calling you Adela—it sounds more dignified."

But Lu-Lu was signing the second book, and did not answer him.

Then he gave her his arm, and they passed together down the almost deserted church into the very much crowded churchyard, for all the country-side had thronged to see the wedding.

There were well-meaning people with nice and clean-washed children, in their Sunday frocks, who strewed flowers in their path and cheered Miss Lu-Lu in her velvet gown, never heeding, as some older folk did, that her dark soft eyes shone out of a face as white as the driven snow, and that she had no word, not even a smile, for the shower of good wishes and congratulations which were poured upon her.

"She were just like a corpse!" remarked one village woman to another. "I never saw Miss Lu-Lu without a smile on her face afore."

And Lu-Lu passed on her way, down the steep churchyard path and across the road to the Hall, like a woman in a dream; and, as they reached the vestibule, she reeled, and, but for her husband's arm, would have fallen to the ground.

She recovered herself in a moment and put him away.

"It was nothing," she said faintly—"only the hurry and bustle and all that. I never could endure to have my cattle hurried"—with the ghost of a smile.

Alan a-Dale, for the first time noticing her pale face, thought her emotion and her faintness were caused by regret. So keen a pang of self-reproach shot through his heart at that moment that, if it had not been too late, he would willingly have let Crowsmount go.

But it was too late. He and Lu-Lu were no longer two, but one in the eye of the law, if not in their own hearts; and the only thing left for him to do was to try his utmost to make amends to her for the sacrifice she had made for him.

He made the resolve within himself, as they seated themselves at the table, with a fervor and solemnity which augured great things for her future happiness, only, unfortunately, the vow which from that moment he set himself to keep was the one most calculated to ensure Lu-Lu's misery.

And then followed the greatest trial of all, the wedding-feast, when Lu-Lu made a brave effort to swallow enough to appear a fair meal; and Alan began his "making amends" by devoting himself with marked attention to Mrs. Athelstane, who sat upon his other hand.

And then there were speeches and health-giving and driking, such as went, like hot iron, deep down into the bride's very soul—during which she had to sit and listen, with a forced smile, while the dear old Rector proposed her health and Alan's, making a few of the time-honored jokes, and ending by a floridly-expressed wish that they might live out their threescore years and ten in happiness and prosperity, and that their marriage might prove like that of his old friends, Mr. and Mrs. Athelstane—full of love and peace and happiness.

In reply to this, to Lu-Lu's horror, Alan thought it necessary—moved, though she little knew it, by a strong sense of doing justice to her—to give an elaborate explanation of the whys and wherefores of his marriage—how he had by his own stupidity and blind folly regularly cornered himself, and but for the timely assistance of his dear old playfellow—with a look at Lu-Lu to indicate that he was speaking of her—he would have let his family estate, the home he had loved as his own soul, slip away from him forever.

And this was not nearly the end of her misery; for her father took an opportunity of airing his views upon the subject, and, being separated from his wife by the bride and bridegroom, was able to babble on without let or hindrance. Amongst it all the bride suffered agonies.

But it came to an end at last, and they drove away from the quaint old house together, both sighing with relief.

"Oh, Alan, it's awful work getting married!" she cried.

"Lu, old woman," he answered, looking at her with eyes as solemn as an owl's, "we'll never do it any more."

"Never!" echoed Lu-Lu, with emphasis.

CHAPTER VI.

FEBRUARY, having once more earned its name of "fill-dyke," had gone out, and March had come in, lion-like, with blustering winds.

Consequently, Mr. and Mrs. Alan a-Dale had wisely eschewed the delights of a marine so-journ and gratefully declined several tempting offers of country houses which various friends had placed at their disposal, going instead to London.

Having come in like a lion, March made preparations towards the end of the month for going out like a lamb, which is a not infrequent habit of the third month of the year.

It was on a very bright soft morning that Lu-Lu, standing idly at the window of their sitting-room, began to drum her fingers carelessly on the pane in a tattoo which presently grew into a tune that in two minutes her lips took up—

"The father was steel and the mother was stone;
They lifted the latch and they bade him begone:
But loud on the morrow their wail and their cry,
For he'd laughed on the lass wi' his bonny black eye:
She fled to the forest to hear a love-tale,
And the youth it was told by was Alan a-Dale."

She was so engrossed by her song that she did not hear the sound of Alan's footsteps behind her, nor was she aware of his presence, until she felt the touch of his hand upon her shoulder.

"Must have had considerable mesmeric power," he laughed. "I should have had to laugh a long time before you would have gone a step after me."

"Yes, a long time," she responded, with a frank laugh. "We Athelstanes never were given to running after men, Alan."

"I should think not, by Jove!"—very fiercely. "For my part, I could imagine nothing more loathsome than a woman who ran after one, except it were one who made love."

"I shall never make love to you, Alan," said Lu-Lu, leaning carelessly against the window-frame, and regarding him with eyes which she managed somehow to make both cool and scornful. "Don't alarm yourself unnecessarily."

"Oh, I wasn't thinking of you at all!" he returned, laughing a little. "No; I pity the poor chap who ever fell in love with you, my dear. I should say an iceberg would be easier to make an impression upon. I was not thinking of you at all, but of women in the abstract. Horrid thing to have love made to you by a woman you didn't like—now wouldn't it be?"

"Horrid!" agreed Lu-Lu, looking straight out of the window across the square. "Or, for the matter of that, by a woman of any kind."

"Oh, I don't know! Of course, if you liked her, it would be different. Ah-tchu!"

"You've taken cold, Alan," remarked Lu-Lu prosaically. "Why, what is that?"

"That" was a square photograph-case, which, as Alan hastily drew his handkerchief from his breast-pocket, fell with a great noise—for so small a thing—to the floor.

"Let me see!" said Lu-Lu quietly, and holding out her hand.

For a moment he hesitated, then something in her resolute face compelled him to lay the case in her outstretched hand.

She was quite cool and steady as she opened it.

The fingers which unfastened the little clasp were as firm as a rock—they betrayed not the slightest sign of agitation—only a great pang shot through her heart as a gleam of rose-color met her gaze.

The picture was of a woman in a pink gown; a small dainty figure, shorter and plumper than Lu-Lu's own, though evidently neither so graceful nor elegant in form, a pair of blue proud imperial eyes, looking out from under a crown of dead-gold hair, a straight little nose, not unlike her own, and a complexion like the inmost heart of a blush-rose.

She looked at the portrait long and earnestly, until her eyes grew dim, and the fair proud face faded away from before her.

Then she roused herself with what, had she not repressed it, would have been a shiver, and gave the case back to her husband.

"You—you loved her?" she asked gently.

It was impossible for Alan to answer other than the exact truth, with those clear brown eyes looking straight into his own.

"Yes, I loved her," he answered.

"Then why," she began.

"She was married to some one else," he replied, in a tone of great pain.

The misery in his own eyes prevented him from seeing the voiceless agony which leaped into Lu-Lu's.

With a mighty effort, she pressed her hands together, and forced back the torrent of tenderest love-words which flooded to her lips.

"Poor Alan! I am very sorry for you!" she said very kindly. "Is it—forgive me for seeming inquisitive—is it very long ago?"

"About two years."

The words were yet another stab, which thrust itself more deeply into her bleeding heart than all the cruel wounds it had borne before.

Was it not two years ago that they had first heard of Alan a-Dale's ideas and—her own?

"And you would have married—married her?"

"If *I* could, of course! Why, my dear, I was awfully in love with her! I suppose I am still. Heavens, I could have eaten her!"

A faint smile curved Lu-Lu's lips, no longer scarlet, but—but absolutely colorless. Alan, never noticing her, went on speaking.

"But, you see, she was married—though she didn't care anything for him—regular brute he was—however, I had to go. I don't know that she would have suited me very well. She had lived nearly all her life in London, and didn't know a turnip from a nettle—couldn't ride or drive, and was horribly afraid of a cow or a dog. Perhaps"—with a philosophic air—"that would have grown rather a nuisance after a time. I would have risked it, though."

"How came you to think so much of her?" Lu-Lu asked.

"Oh, I don't know! She was such a dainty, tender, childish thing; a man couldn't help liking her. She always seemed so clinging and helpless—dependent on you somehow. And yet she was very proud. To any one else didn't like she could be as cold and proud as—as—why, as you are! And she hated the fellow she'd married like poison."

Lu-Lu turned away with a smile—she quite understood all now.

She had heard before that dainty helplessness and childish dependence are the most useful weapons with which a woman assails a man's heart.

She had scorned such means herself, knowing that before marriage a man can talk largely about the ivy clinging to the oak, and afterwards calls the very thing which so captivated him by the prosaic and unromantic name of "whining."

Lu-Lu, being very honest, had begun as she meant to go on—a proceeding which somehow did not seem to answer.

"Then is she very unhappy too?" she asked.

"Oh—well, no, I don't think she is! She doesn't seem somehow to be much with him. Not that I've seen her very lately—not at all since the Squire died."

"And do they live near—home?" she asked, anxious to learn her name, yet not quite caring to ask the question outright.

"Oh, they have no settled home! He is in the 15th Lancers. I met them at York."

"The 15th Lancers!" Lu-Lu echoed. "Why, not the regiment the Trevors were in?"

"Yes. Her husband is the Major—a swaggering brute, ten years older than herself—married her for her money, poor thing. I believe, though, he was awfully fond of her—he couldn't help being that. Well, Lu, old woman, it's of no use crying over spilt milk, is it? I don't know what poor little Georgie and I would have hit it off at all—most likely not. Still it's rather lucky than otherwise, since all this did take place, that I've married a woman to whom it makes not the very smallest difference."

"Yes," agreed Lu-Lu.

"You know it isn't as if you cared a button about me," he continued—"in that way, I mean. Of course, I know you like me very well in a friendly kind of way; but I meant in the—the——"

"Yes, I know," interrupted Lu-Lu, in a dull hard tone.

"And so there is no need to bother ourselves any more about it," he remarked, as if the subject were worth no further consideration and might therefore be dismissed. "What was that song that you were singing when I came in? It was awfully pretty!"

"I don't know," answered Lu-Lu absently, resting her head against the window-frame. "I—I forget."

"Something about Alan a-Dale," he reminded her. "Sing it, there's a good old girl, before we go out."

Thus exhorted, she opened the piano and sang, stopping at the second line, with a hard mirthless laugh.

"My voice is out of tune," she exclaimed trying to be bright. "I will sing some other time. Let us go out. Have you anywhere to go?"

"Have you any shopping to do?" he asked doubtfully, and with a glance at the clock.

"Why? Have you any appointment?"

"I half promised Wrottenhall," he began; but she cut him short.

"I shall be glad of the morning to myself," she said briskly. "I want to see about a bonnet and some dresses—about several things, in fact."

It was an excuse she had made a dozen times during the last month, though her wardrobe had not much increased since she left home. However Alan went out, with a careless though perfectly amiable "By-bye, old girl!" and never for one instant doubted the fact that Lu would be glad to be rid of him for an hour or so.

Poor Lu! She sat down as she saw him go across the square towards his club. She put her elbows on the window-sill and fell a-thinking—thinking of Georgie—poor little Georgie—the tender, clinging, helpless little thing who had played the *role* of the ivy to Alan's oak, though she had her own big swaggering legitimate oak in the shape of the Major of the 15th Lancers. Lu wondered, with a piteous sigh, why she could not be satisfied with him, but must needs go trailing her tendrils round a heart which could never be her own?

And then she fell to dreaming, in a dazed fashion, trying to fancy what Major—yes, Georgie's husband—was like? Big, of course—most little woman's husbands are big; equally of course fair—most Cavalry officers are of a lightish turn of complexion; very fond of her, and perfectly unaware that the young Yorkshire Squire who had dangled about after Georgie could ever do him any harm—to the tune of stealing Georgie's heart, at all events; in age, eight or nine and thirty, Alan said; then she must be a good deal older than Alan, and inclined to look upon Alan as a harmless boy.

Lu-Lu's pride in Alan was so great that, in spite of her own wounded heart, in spite of the whole wickedness of the episode, a little thrill of triumph ran through her at the thought that the blue-eyed North-country lad had, to use a homely term, put the heavy Cavalryman's nose out of joint. And then somehow the pain came back again in all its intensity, and she only remembered that Alan did not love her, that Alan would never be anything to her but a friend.

She was still sitting, resting her arms on the window-ledge, when a cab laden with luggage drew up at the door below. She raised her sad eyes just in time to see a figure clad in velvet and fur pass out of sight, while her companion, a tall dark man, stood to watch the boxes taken off the roof.

"A very handsome man!" said Lu-Lu wearily to herself. "I wonder if they are a happy bridal pair?"

The arrival of the new guests had sufficiently distracted Lu-Lu's attention from her troubles to remind her that, not having had much time for the preparation of a *trousseau*, she really did need considerable additions to her wardrobe before she could appear in her own neighborhood in the character of a bride.

She left the window therefore, and went slowly into the adjoining room to dress.

She was not sufficiently heart-sick to have lost pride in her appearance.

With the whole of the Athelstane family love of dress was very strong; not any of them but would have dressed carefully had they been on a desert island and no one by but themselves to see.

"One hears a good deal," Lu-Lu remarked one day, long before Alan's marriage-troubles came to worry her, "about women's dress—how useless it is to dress for men—how little nine men out of ten know of dress in detail—how most women dress to spite other women! It's all nonsense! I never knew a man yet who could not thoroughly appreciate 'the grand result,' even if he didn't exactly know what the material had cost a yard, or whether the trimmings were Mechlin lace or Honiton. Besides, a well-dressed woman is not necessarily the most expensively-dressed one."

So now Lu-Lu dressed herself carefully in a costume of dark velvet and fur, with a dainty little bonnet such as no English milliner ever turned out of her hands.

She did not hurry over her operations, for she knew what Alan's "hours" with Mr. Wrottenhall implied; and, presently, with her well-gloved hands snugly hidden in a cosy muff, betook herself downstairs on her shopping errand.

She descended the broad stone steps without encountering any one; but in the hall she passed a gentleman who, she perceived, was the owner of the lady and the luggage which had arrived half an hour before.

The look of undisguised admiration which shone out of his bold gray eyes brought a hot flush to the girl's pale face, and made the carriage of the dainty proud head even more haughty than was its wont.

"A letter, madam," said the porter, stepping forward. "It has just arrived."

She stopped and opened it, seeing that it was directed in Alan's writing.

"Mr. a-Dale is bringing a gentleman to dine this evening," she said. "We all dine at seven o'clock."

She crushed the letter into her muff, and would have passed on, only that her way was slightly barred by the approach of a lady who was coming slowly along fastening her gloves.

"How loud!" thought Lu-Lu, noting the dress of lightish green velvet and peacocks' feathers.

"Oh, I beg a thousand pardons," exclaimed the lady hastily, as she almost ran against her.

Lu-Lu bowed; and the two looked at each other.

Into the eyes of the lesser woman there came no shadow of recognition—only the undisguised admiration of one handsome woman for another; but into Lu-Lu's brown orbs came a great gleam of pain—for in the hard, blue, proud eyes and golden hair of the lady in the dress of velvet and peacocks' feathers, she recognised Alan's old love—the original of the portrait in the gown of rose-pink.

"She seems to be fond of bright colors," thought Lu-Lu rather disdainfully, as she passed out. "What a vulgar little body she is."

"What a distinguished-looking woman!" remarked "the vulgar little body" to her husband. "Porter, who is that young lady?"

"Mrs. a-Dale, madam," the man replied politely.

"Mrs. a-Dale," she repeated. "Why, Ned, it must be Alan's wife!"

"What a lucky chap Alan is," answered Ned coolly.

"How odd," went on the little lady, in a musing tone, as she and her husband followed Lu-Lu, "that we should have come to the very same hotel."

"Ah, you won't be able to flirt with Alan now," her husband laughed.

"I don't know," she said dreamily. "No—no; of course not. I shall not wish to do anything of the kind. Besides, when we knew Alan at York, he was a mere boy—it's, oh, ever so long ago."

"Nearly a year—at least, it is eleven months since we left York," Major Fane said prosaically. "I should say, Georgie, before four-and-twenty hours are over, that you'll be at your tricks. Only mind, if you do, I shall flirt with the lady."

"I am not afraid of your flirting with any one but me," returned Georgie conceitedly.

Major Fane laughed; and she joined in his mirth, wondering the while if Alan could have quite forgotten her and all the pretty vows he had made, less than a year ago, under the elm-trees at York.

She had, of course, seen the notice of his marriage, not without a little pang at his having forsaken her memory so soon for another.

So odd too that Alan should have married a sister of that handsome fellow, Alaric Athelstane, who had been quartered at Aldershot at the same time as themselves before they went to York.

"I suppose he calls her 'Addie,'" she said to herself, as she walked up the Haymarket alongside of her consort. "Adela Bulstrode Athelstane, her name was—a handsome name for a handsome person. I never thought, though, that Alan would have chosen a dark woman. I daresay, when he sees us, he will utterly repudiate me and be Ned's old friend. She is not much like Alaric—he is fair. Such a handsome fellow, with the yellowest hair and bluest eyes under the sun."

It happened that little Mrs. Fane had made as devoted a friend of Alaric Athelstane as she had afterwards done of Alan a-Dale—with this difference, that Alan, like all the a-Dales, was a little inclined to be pig-headed, while Alaric, like all the Athelstanes, was keenness itself—he saw through the Major's little wile in a moment.

She was rather remarkable for transparency, was little Mrs. Georgie—just a greedy, vain little woman, not so well off as she would have liked to be, not quite such a leader of fashion as she felt she ought to have been; but quite willing to make the most of her proud little face and the blue imperious eyes of which one glance was generally sufficient to bring men to her feet—young men, at all events. She never could forget that Alaric Athelstane had seen through her little tactics at a very early stage in their flirtation, and had taken scrupulous care to keep himself just out of the reach of her small rapacious fingers.

If, on his score, she could manage to let fall one bitter drop into the cup of Mrs. Alan a-Dale's matrimonial bliss, she would be thoroughly overjoyed; thus her so-called friendship with Alaric Athelstane would be no inducement to her to show mercy on Alan a-Dale's wife.

It happened about six o'clock on the same evening that Alan a-Dale, going slowly up the stairs towards his rooms, met a lady clad in green velvet, with a letter in her hand. The soft whistle upon his lips died away in a sharp jerk, and his blue eyes opened to their fullest extent.

"Georgie!" he cried. "Can that be you?"

"Oh, Alan!"

Two soft little trembling hands went fluttering towards him, two large eyes of tender forget-me-not blue were raised to his—eyes no longer proud or imperious—only clouded with joyful tears; he saw two quivering scarlet lips and a plump little figure which he longed to take in his arms and keep there for ever.

"Oh, Alan!" she said again.

"How pale you are!" he remarked, holding her trembling little hands fast. "You are ill—unhappy? What is it? Tell me."

"I thought you had forgotten me," she said, in a half-whisper. "I—I thought it was so soon."

"Forgotten you?" he echoed. "No, Georgie; you are still—as you always been—the dearest on earth to me."

"But you are married."

"Yes"—with a sigh—"unhappily I am married; but that was not my fault."

"Not your fault?" she repeated.

"I was obliged to marry," he explained, rather forlornly. "My dear uncle, bless him, had a craze on the subject, and left his estates hampered by a provision that I should be married before my twenty-fifth birthday—it was a case of willy-nilly."

"Then you don't," Mrs. Fane began.

"Love my wife? Yes; I am very fond of her—very. I have always been so; but I am certainly not what is called 'in love' with her."

"And does she know that?"

Alan laughed aloud.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

PEOPLE have generally three epochs in their confidence in man. In the first they believe him to be everything that is good, and they are lavish with their friendship and confidence. In the next, they have had experience, which has smitten down their confidence, and they then have to be careful not to mistrust every one, and to put the worst construction upon everything. Later in life, they learn that the greater number of men have much more good in them than bad, and that, even when there is cause to blame, there is more reason to pity than condemn; and then a spirit of confidence again awakens within them.

THE death-rate of the world is computed about 67 a minute, 97,760 a day, and 35,639,835 a year; while the birth-rate is 70 a minute, 100,500 a day, 36,792,000 a year.

OUR EARLY DAYS.

BY T. H. BAYLEY.

Whate'er our lot in life may be,
Sweet early days, we turn to you;
The friends who won our youthful love,
Are dearer far than ties more new.

Though fortune, when those friends depart,
May lead us on through flowery ways,
We miss the sunshine of the heart,
That sheds a light o'er early days:

Oh! what must be endured by those
Whose hopes are blighted ere they bloom—
Who see false friends becoming foes,
Fast as life's gladness fades to gloom!

More fondly to the blissful past,
They turn when present bliss decays;
And fading memory loses last,
Her deep regret for early days.

Elma's Adventure.

BY M. E. PENN.

"SEVEN trunks, and five hat and bonnet boxes," said Mrs. Anton, counting them on her fingers, "two large and two small bundles of wraps, two of parasols, a couple of baskets, and a strap of books—is that all? Are you sure the cabmen have them all? And my folding chair—has anyone remembered my folding-chair? Then I think we may start!"

"But oh! Marianne," and the pretty but somewhat sulky-looking housemaid was beckoned to draw nearer, "I hope you have impressed on cook that the house is never to be left. Both of you can go out every day; I do not wish to curtail your liberty, only you must not go out together."

Pollie, as the damsel preferred to be called, muttered "that with so much house-cleaning expected of 'em there wouldn't be much time for going out," but Mrs. Anton did not choose to hear this.

"You have my written paper of instructions. I hope I shall find everything clean and in beautiful order on my return. Yes, my loves, I am coming! I think that is all, except that I have not said good-bye to dear little Elma. Oh! I cannot start till I have done that! Where is she?"

Very reluctantly did Elma, a tall, graceful girl of nineteen, Dr. Anton's daughter by a former marriage, come forward and submit to be enfolded in the plump arms of her step-dame.

"So awfully sorry to be obliged to leave you behind, my pet, but five would be such an awkward number, involving another bed-room; and you can so easily have your holiday another time. You'll write to me every day, won't you, love? I shall not be happy about you if I do not hear from you frequently.

And away went Mrs. Anton, kissing her hand and waving a newspaper from the window of one of the cabs, whilst her two daughters did the same from the other; and Miss Cecilia De Crespigny, their bosom friend, for whom Elma had been set aside, smiled supercilliously in the background, or made eyes at Kit Hollis, Mrs. Anton's restless son, whom she had succeeded in pinning to her side for this trip to Scarborough.

Away rattled the vehicles and the door was shut with a crash by Pollie, with the ejaculation:

"Glad to see the back of you all!"

Cook, who had been dragged into the service of the travelers to cord boxes, and buckle straps, and assist in carrying luggage downstairs, now retreated to her kitchen to rest after such unwonted exertions; and Elma Anton, with her lips very tightly compressed, walked into the breakfast-parlor.

There the centre table was heaped with the tasks she was expected to accomplish during the ensuing month.

"The dear child would not feel dull," Mrs. Anton had said, "if she had plenty to occupy her."

The first thing Elma did was to seize the huge roll of cretonne that was to be converted into curtains for the bedrooms, and hurl it across the room; a smaller roll of dimity shared the same fate, and was followed by sundry heaps of house-linen to be made or mended by the skilful fingers wily Mrs. Anton kept so fully employed.

Not till a basket of threads and cottons crowded the pile did a smothered laugh inform Elma that there was a witness of her proceedings.

Glancing over her shoulder, she saw that the gentleman who was taking charge of some of her father's patients during Dr. Anton's absence in Switzerland was seated at the doctor's desk, looking over and transcribing some medical notes to which he had access.

Mr. Durban apologized for his laughter as soon as he saw Elma's face crimson with annoyance.

"I am glad to see that you remember and act upon my advice not to sit so closely to your books and easel, but take more exercise," he said, demurely.

"You need not quiz me any more," retorted Elma, trying to overcome her vexation. "I do not often have a rebellious mood, but I plead guilty to one this morning. I am so desperately cross that I must cool down before I can say I am ashamed of my folly, or pick up what I have thrown down."

"May I help you? No? Nor sympathize with you? Then I must not even ask why you are disappointed at this change in Mrs. Anton's arrangements?"

"Do not ask me anything, please," said Elma, quickly, "but forget how childishly I have been behaving. Good morning, Mr. Durban. Cook will send some soup to-day to the poor fellow for whom you have bespoken some kitchen-physic."

But though Elma was too brave or too honorable to complain of the injustice of her father's wife, she could not shake off her angry feelings, but walked up and down the narrow strip of ground behind the house, struggling with them unsuccessfully.

Mrs. Anton had interfered when the doctor would have taken his motherless daughter with him to the Continent, and argued so plausibly that it would not be nice for Elma to be the only lady of the party, that he was induced to think it might be wiser and kinder to let her accompany her stepmother to Scarborough.

And now she was deprived of this pleasure too, and for motives that made her cheek burn with shame for those who acted upon them.

This silly, conceited Cecilia De Crespigny, whose grandfather's name was Cripps, had lately inherited a sum of money, which Mrs. Anton coveted for her son by her first husband.

Kit's inability to settle to any profession, and extravagance, made her very anxious to secure for him a rich wife, that she refused to see the faults of the purse-proud girl on whom her choice had fallen.

Presently Elma's musings were interrupted.

"I wish, Miss Elma, you wouldn't walk on that rough gravel, wearing out your pretty slippers, and looking so miserable," exclaimed Pollie, who, as the young lady's foster-sister, was privileged to accost her with affectionate familiarity. "Do come indoors and let cook send you up a tasty luncheon, and I'll go round to the library for the newest books they've got, and only think! There'll be nobody to disturb you!

"There's something in that, you know, miss," Pollie proceeded to argue. "For a whole month you will be your own mistress, instead of being worried to death with other people's whims and 'xactions. You can get up when you like; go to bed when you like; read, or play the piano, or paint as long as you please."

"And pine all the while for that delicious spell of fresh, free air, and change of scene from this dull, dingy street, which everyone has but me."

Elma spoke with a sob, and the sympathizing Pollie was silenced for nearly five minutes. Then she ventured to put a query:

"Did you wish to go to the seaside so very much, Miss Elma?"

"So much that I cannot reconcile myself to being left behind. Four weeks of utter loneliness seems more than I can possibly bear."

And now Elma, who had been very much tried by the heat of the summer, cried outright, and retreating to her chamber, locked herself in, and was seen no more till the evening.

She certainly felt better and more cheerful after partaking of the well-cooked dinner, dressed so daintily by cook, and served so neatly by Pollie, but the prospect of the long dull evening, to be followed by many similar ones, was not exhilarating.

She was in the garden watering the few flowers she had coaxed into blossom, and trying to decide which would be the more engrossing occupation—practicing a difficult sonata, or translating half a dozen pages of Schiller—when she found Pollie at her elbow again.

"Miss Elma, you've always said you'd go and see mother when she was settled in her new cottage at Sandibay. She thinks it hard you don't. Couldn't you take this opportunity? She'd be that glad."

"A good thought," cried Elma, excitedly. "Yes, I will go and take you with me, if only for a week. Papa will not disapprove I am sure. We will start to-morrow. Dear old nurse, it is not my fault that I have not paid her a visit sooner."

But suddenly the gladness died out of Elma's expressive features, and she put down her watering-pot, sighing quite heavily:

"Oh! dear, I had forgotten. It is impossible. Fate is against me. There is an obstacle in the way that neither you nor I took into consideration. I have no money. Mrs. Anton refused me my quarterly allowance yesterday, alleging that she might want all the cash papa had left her."

"And she gave the same reason for not paying my wages. If she isn't the——"

But Elma's stern "Hush," sent Pollie indoors with her apron pressed to her mouth.

Only to return, however, after a very brief interval spent in abusing missus and that hateful Miss Scripping, through whom her own dear young lady, who was a real lady bred and born, was so cruelly put upon; to all which the cook cordially assented.

"It's only fifty-five miles to Sandibay, Miss Elma, and it is to be done if you don't mind having me for a companion and fellow-traveler."

"I intended taking you. Papa would not like me to travel alone; but—but Pollie. I know what you are going to suggest," and Elma's color rose, "I will not borrow from Mr. Durban, and I forbid you to do so."

"Lor', Miss Elma, he's a very nice gentleman, and speaks so kind to the poor, it's quite a pleasure to hear him."

"Mr. Durban is all you say, but I do not choose to be indebted to him," Elma replied, hastily, "so we must be content to stay at home."

"Oh! no, miss; you haven't heard my plan. There's ways and means of going to Sandibay with no more money than the half-sovereign I laid by for a new bonnet, and which you shall pay me back by-and-by, if you're too proud to be obligated to your foster-sister."

"This is very mysterious," laughed Elma. "How is the journey to be made? On foot?"

"This way;" and opening the door of a shed, Pollie pointed to the new tandem tricycle which had been Kit Hollis's last extravagance. "If you'll steer, Miss Elma, I'll do all the hard work."

"Go to Sandibay on this!"

"Why shouldn't we?" demanded Pollie, not a whit daunted by Elma's doubtful ejaculation. "The distance is none so great, and the roads are good. We can do thirty miles the first day, sleep at the Temperance Hotel at——, where, I've heard you say, you and your pa stopped when you went to that Arky-something 'sociation, and get to mother's in good time the next evening. Two days to go, and you enjoying the scenery all the while, three to stay at mother's, and two to come back; and we shall have had a capital week's outing, and no one any the worse or the wiser for it."

"My dear Pollie, although Kit, when he had no other companion, has sometimes taken me out for a spin, as he calls it, and taught me how to manage his cycle, you have had no experience, and can form no idea what hard work you would find it at first."

Pollie laughed saucily.

"Begging your pardon, Miss Elma, me and cook has tried this cycle more than once, up and down the garden, in the twilight or the moonlight, when nobody happened to be about. You won't find me as awkward as you fancy, and it would be a rare lark."

Elma did not reply, but her warm, youthful blood tingled, and her heart gave a great throb.

To start off in the freshness of the early morning, and glide along the roads that led to the country, lingering in some shady lane, and resting on the sward during the heat of noon, and then away again, rapidly or leisurely, according to her mood, with no one to dictate to or interfere with her, what could be pleasanter?

To bid adieu, for one brief, delicious week to the home that was home no longer now a new mistress ruled it, and Mrs. Anton's daughters jostled her out of her rightful place, was a proposal too tempting to be refused.

"But cook?" she said, faintly.

"Oh, I've sounded her. She'll get her sister to stay with her."

"And Mr. Durban! He must not know. No one must know till papa comes back to England. Of course I shall tell him."

"Mr. Durban isn't likely to ask for you while he knows you are left here by yourself," decided Pollie, shrewdly; "or, if he should, cook can say you are gone out. He'll not expect to be told where."

"I'm half inclined to venture——"

"All right, Miss Elma. To-morrow morning, then. What time will you be ready?"

Still Elma hesitated. Would her father approve?

There was a spice of risk and daring in the enterprise which made it all the more attractive to her; but would he like to know that his little daughter had traveled to Sandibay in such an unusual style, and with no better guide or companion than a harum-scarum country girl as young as herself?

She walked back into the house, where cook was employed in picking up the rolls of cretonne and heaps of linen, and stacking them on occasional tables.

At this sight the old spirit of revolt awoke, and Elma turned abruptly to her attendant:

"Mr. Durban comes at nine to see papa's poor patients. Very well; then we will start at seven, weather permitting."

The weather! Why, it was perfection that morning! the sun slowly chasing away the mists of the dawn, and a fresh but moderate breeze from the southwest tempering the heat of his beams.

It was a nervous moment when the tandem was pushed out of the side-gate at Dr. Anton's.

Fortunately, there was no one about, and the fair riders took their seats with outward composure, although even the bolder Pollie could feel her pulses flutter, now the adventure was actually commencing.

Looking neat and lady-like in the close-fitting tweed dress and toque made to wear on the Swiss mountains, Elma nodded good-bye to their only confidante, who threw an old slipper after them, for luck; Pollie, her smarter costume concealed and guarded by an old ulster, drew the last buckle of the straps that secured a basket and small valise; the signal was given, and Mr. Durban, coming earlier than usual, to procure some medicine for a critical case, arrived just in time to see the tandem propelled round the corner of the hill, but highly genteel, suburban street in which Dr. Anton's house was located.

* * * * * *

Everything went well that day. In the vicinity of all the large cities lady tricyclists are now numerous enough to evoke no surprise and but little curiosity.

If a few admiring stares were levelled at the refined face of Elma, or the rustic prettiness of Pollie, no other annoyance was experienced; and the first twenty miles were accomplished, not without fatigue certainly, but more rapidly and easily than they had anticipated.

A long rest was taken in the middle of the day.

Not caring to subject themselves to interruption from other wayfarers, they rode up to the door of a farm-house and asked permission to bivouac under a clump of trees in one of the cornfields, which permission was cheerfully given, and supplemented with the offer of a jug of new milk.

Into their basket had been packed a tiny kettle and spirit-lamp, as well as the sandwiches and cake provided by good old cook.

There was a pocket edition of Shakspeare in Elma's satchel, and knitting-pins and a ball of wool in Pollie's, so all through the glowing hours of the afternoon the twain lounged on the sward, one reading aloud, the other working, till the sun began to dip behind the farmer's tall elm-trees.

Then a fresh start was made, and just before twilight deepened into night the tandem stopped at the door of the quiet old-fashioned hotel, where Dr. Anton's daughter was sufficiently well remembered to secure her a comfortable chamber, with a smaller one adjoining for her attendant.

They started on the morrow in the best of spirits, a little stiff perhaps from such unwonted exertion; but assuring each other that this would soon pass off.

And so it did: but the ride lacked the enjoyment of the previous day.

The weather was less favorable, the roads more hilly, and towards noon the wind rose, and set steadily against them.

Every mile became more difficult, and annoyances occurred they had not encountered before.

The rough boys of a village school, highly entertained at the sight of their equipage, amused themselves by stoning the riders, till they succeeded in escaping their persecutors.

Then they were somewhat alarmed at finding that they were followed, at some distance certainly, by a male tricyclist, who stopped when they stopped, and went on when they did, never drawing nearer, yet always keeping them in view.

By-and-by their uneasiness turned into gratitude, for while walking up a long hill they were overtaken by a couple of tramps, who, not content with the shilling Elma gave them, demanded more, and became abusive when it was refused.

The spot they had chosen for their attack upon the helpless, terrified girls was such a lonely one that they must have submitted to be robbed of the very small sum of money in their possession, and Elma was trembling for her watch and locket, if a loud shout had not startled their assailants.

The cyclist was hurrying to the rescue, and brandishing such a formidable-looking stick that the fellows decamped.

Pollie thought they ought to stop and thank their deliverer; but Elma, reluctant to make an acquaintance on the road, preferred to push on as rapidly as possible.

Rain was now beginning to beat in their faces, and at the foot of the next hill they would have to surmount, Pollie suddenly began to cry.

"Oh, Miss Elma, I'm awful sorry; I am indeed, but I'm dead tired and don't feel as I could go a step further. It's seven miles more to mother's by the milestone; and how we'll get there I dunno."

Elma, who was in almost as weary a plight, though she would not own it, cast a forlorn glance around.

The only cottages in sight were a cluster of deplorable hovels beside a brick-kiln, and the day was drawing rapidly to a close.

To be benighted here, with the rain falling more and more steadily every minute, was a terrible prospect, and lingering only made matters worse.

Suddenly Pollie's face cleared.

"Look here, Miss Elma, I've just remembered that there's a cross lane beyond the kilns that'll take us into the Dilton Road, close to the Red Lion. Hannah Martin, who was in the sixth standard with me at Sandibay school, has married the man who keeps that house. She'll give us a night's lodging for old acquaintance sake, and we will go on to mother's early in the morning."

Not very willingly did Elma consent; she longed to reach the shelter of her old nurse's roof; but if Pollie was too tired to proceed, what was to be done?

Accordingly they followed the windings of the cross lane till they reached the smart little wayside house, only to find it so well filled with the members of a cycling club as to promise poorly for their own accommodation.

The landlord was too busy carving for his hungry guests, whose cycles were under a shed, to take any notice of the new arrivals; and mine hostess, when called from the kitchen to receive them, did not give Pollie as cordial a reception as she had hoped for.

Oh, yes, she recollected her well enough, but she was in too great a hurry to stop and talk, and as for a room—here were all full.

However, Elma's courteous entreaties so far prevailed, that tea was brought to her in the landlady's own parlor, and arrangements made for her to occupy a tiny chamber in the roof, with a shakedown on the floor for her foster-sister.

And to this tiny chamber both the weary travelers thankfully retreated as soon as a hint was given that they were in the way, not to sleep very soundly, but to lie and listen to the rain pattering on the tiles overhead, and mentally wonder how they should continue their journey in the morning.

However, the sun was breaking through the clouds when Elma rose and pushed open the narrow lattice.

The roads would be heavy, but seven miles would soon be compassed, and the first part of their expedition successfully

accomplished.

Now it was that her thoughts went back to the home she had somewhat rashly quitted.

Had Mr. Durban found out that she was no longer there? And what would he say or think of her for taking such an unusual step.

She was surprised to find how much she valued the opinion of the thoughtful, clever practitioner, who had first been her father's pupil, and was now one of his most valued friends.

But Pollie, who had been downstairs reconnoitring, came back in a very pettish mood.

"It's no use hoping for any breakfast here. They are all too busy getting a great meal ready for them young gentlemen to have a thought to spare for us. I suppose the best thing we can do, Miss Elma, is to slip quietly away and say nothing to anybody. I paid for our tea and this miserable room last evening, so there's nothing to hinder our going when we like, and how we like."

Accordingly they quietly left the house, rewarded the old man who had cleaned their tandem, and they had taken their departure before any of the owners of the other cycles made their appearance below stairs.

Under a blue sky, and exhilarated by a refreshing breeze, they returned to the road they had quitted and took the route to Sandibay, Pollie grumbling and sighing as they went.

Her very rough bed on the floor had tended to increase the stiffness of which she had complained on the previous day, and these last seven miles threatened to prove very tedious ones.

Not half of them had been traversed, when a great rattling of wheels was heard behind them, and soon quite a procession of cyclists came in sight, accompanied by a chaise-cart, in which the most prominent figures were a couple of large policemen.

"We do not want to be gazed at by all these people," murmured Elma; "let us run the tandem down that lane yonder, and stay there till they have gone by."

But as soon as her intention was perceived by the approaching party loud cries of "Stop!—stop!" were raised, and in another minute Miss Anton found herself surrounded.

To her indescribable amazement, half a dozen voices accused her of having stolen the cycle on which she and Pollie was seated.

"If you've only taken it for a lark," said the leader of the group, "say so, and we will let you go. If not, we shall be under the unpleasant necessity of giving you in charge."

"I do not understand you," responded Elma, indignantly. "This tandem is the property of one of my relatives.

"Anyhow, John Adams paid for it," exclaimed one of the young men, "for I was with him at the time."

"You took it out of the yard at the Red Lion," said one of the policemen, producing a pocket-book to jot down the answers of the culprits.

"Where John and I left it last night," the young man added. "There's plenty here to bear witness of it."

Elma anxiously examined the tricycle. Could she have ridden off on the wrong one?

No, here was the ugly dent on the handle of the brake made when Kit, during a trial trip, upset himself and her, and slightly damaged his purchase.

"It is mine," she asseverated, with more confidence. "At least, it belongs to my—my"—in what degree of relationship towards her did Kit stand?—"my half-brother."

"Perhaps you'll kindly supply the name and address of my—my half-brother," said one of the policemen who was facetious.

But Elma hesitated to do this, and checked Pollie, when, recovering her speech, the agitated damsel bade them take care what they said or did to a young lady, who was a lady born and bred, and the daughter of——

She was forbidden to say any more, and her warning was received with derisive laughter.

"Better say at once you are both princesses in disguise. Anyhow, these gentlemen swear to the tricycle, and you must answer for what you have done. It's our duty to take you back to the Red Lion and learn whether Mr. Adams intends to give you into custody."

"Why! that means putting us in prison!" shrieked Polly, clinging to her young mistress in such a frenzy of terror that Elma could scarcely preserve her own composure.

To be taken along a public thoroughfare by constables, to be stared at, and scouted as a thief——

What she would have done, or how escape such degradation she never knew, for as her troubled looks traveled from one to another of the faces surrounding her, reading in some amusement, in others a half-insolent admiration, the throng was thrust aside, and a joyful cry escaped her lips, for Mr. Durban stood before her.

With quiet authority he silenced Pollie's weeping, drew Elma's hand through his arm, and addressed her accusers.

"This young lady is under my care, and has been ever since she left her father's house. Here is my card. There are two or three gentlemen here who know me, and will accept my assurance, that if there has been a mistake it shall be rectified. I pledge them my word that Miss Anton quitted London on this tandem, or one precisely like it."

Elma hastened to point out the dent in the handle, and the young man who had been most confident that it was his friend's now wavered.

John Adams's had no such mark on his; but if this wasn't his, where was his? When—John being too lame, or too lazy to stir—he, the speaker, had gone out to see if the tandem had been properly cleaned, it had disappeared, and the old man in charge confessed that two young women had ridden off on it, and as they had given him sixpence, it might be to bribe him to say nothing about it.

But here came a messenger in hot haste, despatched by the said John Adams, to inform his too-impetuous friends that the missing tandem had been removed by him on the previous evening to a lock-up coach-house, where they would find it on their return to the breakfast that was growing cold.

When Elma could escape from the apologies tendered to her, she glanced timidly at Mr. Durban, who continued to walk by her side.

"How came I here?" he said, guessing the meaning of that look. "Your good father bade me take care of you while he was away. I saw you start, and felt it my duty to follow."

"And you think I have acted very foolishly. I will go home at once."

"Indeed, you must not do that!" he answered. "I have wired to mother to meet you at Sandibay. I want you to know her, and you may leave me to make the necessary explanations to Mrs. Anton, if you will."

Then in lower tones he said:

"Do you not trust me sufficiently? Have you not guessed yet how precious you are to me?"

And so the adventure ended in a betrothal; and, as Miss De Crespigny did not accept Kit Hollis after all, Mrs. Anton bitterly regretted the little scheme that had not gained her a daughter-in-law, but lost her the most useful members of her household, for Pollie went away to preside over the domestic offices of young Mrs. Durban.

Not Fairly Treated.

BY H. D.

"WHOM do you think I saw with the Donellys at Ascot, eh, Em?" said Mr. Dudley to his wife, as he sat in the conservatory enjoying an after-dinner cigar, while she reclined sleepily in a lounging-chair not far off.

"Don't know, and don't care!" pouted the lady, who was always out of humor before and after the races, for the reason that her husband made a point of spending the race week with a friend, to whose bachelor residence ladies were not admitted. "One of your old flames, I suppose, with whom my absence gave you an excellent opportunity for a flirtation."

"I never had any 'flames' but you," was the reply; "if your conscience were as clear as mine—but we'll not harp on that subject. I think I told you Ulric Warne has come back to England."

Mrs. Dudley testified some little interest now, and turned her pretty sulky face towards her husband.

"Really? Is he very much withered and dried up? I used to think him so handsome."

"With the exception of sunburn I saw very little difference in him. He was in excellent spirits, and is getting on capitally at Antigua."

"Hem! Did he ask after me?"

"Almost cordially. You did not break his heart when you threw him over to marry your humble servant."

"Who told you I jilted him?" asked Mrs. Dudley, and she had the grace to blush.

"It was common talk at the time, my dear. Half a dozen officious friends took the trouble to acquaint me with the fact. I was very well aware that I should not have won you if I had not possessed a better position and fairer prospects than Ulric Warne could boast of just then."

"And yet you married me!"

"Instead of serving you as you served Warne—yes! Your father and I had just gone into partnership, and, I hated a bother then, as much as I do now."

There was silence after this not very flattering avowal, and perhaps pretty Mrs. Dudley asked herself whether she might not have been a happier woman, if she had kept faith with her first wooer, than she was as the wife of John Dudley.

There was very little love lost between her and the man who gave her all the luxuries of wealth, but whose admiration of her beauty had long since passed into a sort of half-contemptuous liking for the woman who kept his house, sat at the head of his table, and aired his horses in the London parks.

"You haven't guessed who it was I saw with the Donellys?" Mr. Dudley observed, when his wife rose with a yawn, and talked of going to bed.

"You told me," she answered, curtly. "Ulric Warne."

"That was old news; and he was not with the Donellys then, though they were pressing him very much to go to them. The person I meant was your cousin Vera."

"Vera Stapylton? Dear me! I haven't seen her since my marriage, five or six years ago. She must be quite the old maid."

"On the contrary, she has developed into a very handsome woman."

"Oh, Mr. Dudley, that's impossible! You only say it to vex me!" cried his wife, angrily.

John Dudley raised his eyebrows.

"How absurd you are, Em! I say again, Miss Stapylton, who was an unformed girl of seventeen when she made one of your bridesmaids, has improved astonishingly. If you refuse to believe me, go and see her."

"Not I, indeed! What is she doing at Mrs. Donelly's? Teaching their little girls?"

"Simply visiting there. Someone was telling me that an old aunt has left her an income, not large enough to attract fortune-hunters, but sufficient to enable her to live comfortably."

"Perhaps I will give her a call after all," said Mrs. Dudley to herself, as she went slowly upstairs.

She was not intimate with this family, for they preferred to gather about them a more refined and intelligent class than the merely rich; but there was just sufficient acquaintance to warrant a morning call, especially as Vera Stapylton was staying at their picturesque house on the borders of Windsor Forest.

Mrs. Dudley was shown into one of a suite of cool, shady, summer parlors, and here she found Vera seated near an open window at work.

"So awfully pleased to see you once more, Vera, darling! Where have you been hiding yourself all these long years? You are looking wonderfully young! What are you making with those breadths of gold-colored silk?"

Vera Stapylton had tried to resume her occupation, while her cousin dropped into a comfortable chair and talked on, but the sight of Emma Dudley awakened so many painful recollections that there was a lump in her throat and her hands were trembling.

"You have been a lucky girl, Vera. Immensely fortunate!"

"If it is lucky to be alone in the world—yes, I have."

Mrs. Dudley smiled, and took a survey through her eye-glass of some bric-a-brac in a cabinet.

"Then you are a little sentimental still! At your age it behoves us to be practical. By the way, Ulric Warne is staying here, isn't he? Is he much altered? Does he ever speak of me?"

"Mr. Warne holds no conversation with me on any subject," responded Vera, stiffly. "He left England under the impression that it was by my advice you broke faith with him, and he still retains that impression."

"Then he was never married! Poor fellow, he must have been very fond of me! I think I should like to see him once more."

"He has gone to London to-day with Mr. Donelly," and if it was with a little secret triumph this information was given, Vera may be pardoned.

"So he is a confirmed old bachelor. I wonder you do not try to console him. You know you were desperately in love with ——"

"How can you, how dare you remind me of what it has cost me so much to forget and to forgive? Yes, I did love Ulric Warne, and he liked me a little, till you, to gratify your vanity, exerted all your fascinations to win him; and having made him think you an angel," Vera added, bitterly, "you flung him aside for a richer husband!"

"Perhaps I was to blame a little," Mrs. Dudley admitted; "but I did not know you would feel it so keenly. Is it too late for you to regain your empire?"

"I have told you that Mr. Warne believes I incited you to wrong him, and therefore avoids me."

"Very ungrateful of him, I am sure."

And then, as Mrs. Dudley saw her cousin start and redden, she leaned back in her chair and laughed significantly.

"Ah, yes, I repeat it: ungrateful! Do you think I have not known all along that it was you poor Ulric had to thank for that excellent appointment at Antigua."

"He was moody and miserable," Vera murmured, "and I knew the change of scene and the prospect of speedy advancement would give him the impetus he needed. But you'll not speak of this to anyone? Think how galling to his pride it would be if he were ever to learn that he lay under an obligation to a woman he had despised?"

"I shall be mute, for I want you to come and stay with me. When can you get away from these people?"

But Vera, pale and set-lad, was gazing in the direction of a half-open door.

"There is someone in that room! I heard a movement there!"

Mrs. Dudley stole across the carpet on tiptoe, peeped in, and came back with a scornful smile on her lip.

"Pshaw! there is only that deaf, disagreeable old aunt of Mrs. Donelly's sitting there writing letters. I declare you quite frightened me!"

Vera was spared the trouble of replying by the entrance of Mrs. Donelly, who was, however, too cold in her courtesies to give Mrs. Dudley any encouragement to repeat her visit; and her half-formed intention of getting up a Platonic intimacy with her former lover was nipped in the bud.

But the affair did not end here. Mrs. Donelly's old aunt was not deaf after all, and she revenged herself for the opprobrious term applied to her of disagreeable, by taking down in writing a faithful report of the conversation to which she had played the listener. This she gave to Ulric Warne telling him that only by reading it could he learn how unjustly he had condemned Vera Stapylton.

The first time nurse complained that the children's frocks were disgracefully shabby Mrs. Daddley remembered her cousin, and wrote, pressing her to come and make a long stay with her affectionate Emma.

The answer she received was dated from Jersey, where Vera was staying with the friends of Mr. Warne.

"Ulric and I understood each other at last," she wrote, "and when he goes back to Antigua he will take me with him. May you and Mr. Dudley be as happy as we are."

But as Mrs. Dudley tore up this note, and ever afterwards was accustomed to speak of the newly-married couple as a pair of romantic idiots, we are afraid she was not properly grateful for these good wishes.

Scientific and Useful.

BRASS ORNAMENTS.—To clean Oriental and other brass ornaments, take a lemon without the peel, cut it in two, and take out the pips; well rub the articles to be cleaned with the pieces of lemon, then wash them in plain warm water; dry with a soft cloth, and polish with a clean leather, and the brass will look like new again.

VERMIN.—Cayenne dusted into their holes, or salt strewn about their runs, will kill ants. Salt-and-water, or alum-water, strong and warm, should be used for bedsteads and the fine under the beds. Snails and slugs may be kept at bay with quicklime, and moths with cloves, which may be folded in clothing or anything of value without fear of injury, while their scent is so pleasant that it cannot be objectionable.

A NIGHT SIGHT FOR GUNS.—A device has been discovered which enables guns to be aimed in all degrees of dusk or darkness. It is said to be even better for sighting than daylight, and not to fatigue the eye. The device consists in focusing the rays from electric lamps in two minute points of light which are easily adjusted. This is effected by means of two small spherical lenses. As most war ships now have the electric light, the device is readily applied there.

NON-CONDUCTOR.—A very efficient and cheap non-conductor for steam pipes can be made from four parts of sifted coal-ashes, one part plaster of Paris, and one part flour. These should be mixed with water to the consistency of thick mortar, and laid round the pipe enclosed in a trough. After it has been thoroughly dried out by the steam passing through the pipe, it may be wrapped with muslin to prevent its cracking or breaking off. By mixing plasterer's hair with it, it may be made self-sustaining.

PETROLEUM FOR FUEL.—A German scientist has been experimenting with the Russian Government in solidifying petroleum for use as fuel. As reported, his process is to heat the oil and then add from one to three per cent. of common soap, and boil again for half an hour. The soap dissolves and then turns the liquid into a putty-like mass, which is as hard as suet tallow when cold. The product is difficult to light, burns slowly, without smoke, but with great heat, and leaves about two per cent. of a black hard residuum.

Farm and Garden.

SMALL POTATOES.—The small potatoes may be cooked and fed to the pigs and poultry. Always sort out the potatoes and have them as uniform in size as possible before marketing them.

THE PIGS.—It is not necessary that a pig-house should not freeze, but it is necessary that the air should be free from dampness and the chilliness which is connected with a cellar, or warm, damp place. Hogs are very susceptible to colds, both inward and outward, and to rheumatism.

POT-PLANTS.—One of the cheapest and best modes of destroying insects in pot plants is to invert the pot and dip the plants for a few seconds in water warmed to 130°. A German paper, referring to the plan, says that the azalea will stand 133° without injury. Usually heat the water pretty well, and pour in cool until 130° is reached.

ASHES.—Ashes should never be left exposed to the rains. They should be kept under cover or scattered at once over the land. The potash is very soluble, and is easily dissolved out. By carefully preserving the ashes they may be used as a special fertilizer on clover, potatoes, or on fields deficient in alkaline substances. They should never be added to the manure heap.

THE STABLES.—Where the stables are cleaned daily, a manure pit, for the preservation of manure, must be provided. This pit should have about double the stable surface, should be two feet deep, and have a wall or ridge outside, at least a foot higher than the surrounding surface, in order to exclude water during rains. It is not necessary to cover the pit, as the amount of rain or snow falling upon the manure will not more than compensate for the evaporation. The bottom or sides of the pit should be impervious to water, so as to prevent loss of the soluble constituents.

OILING.—Fifty cents invested in linseed oil, and an hour's time applying it to your wagon wheels, will save you the expense of having the tires of your wagon cut or "stoved", and perhaps a break-down or trouble of some kind when you least expect it. Put the oil into a shallow vessel and heat it as hot as you can. Raise the wagon wheel as when oiling the spindle, and place the vessel under so that the rim will pass through the oil. Pass the rim through the oil slowly three or four times, and the work will be done. The hot oil saturates the felloe and prevents it from becoming water-soaked.

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We would direct the attention of our friends and readers to the *marked reduction in our club rates* as given above, and respectfully ask those who are in the habit of getting up clubs for THE POST to enter the field soon as possible and try to increase their lists.

We are hoping to get a great many good sized clubs for the coming year, and trust every one of our subscribers and readers will make an effort to send one. We make it easy for you to do so, for we have *reduced the club rates* to such a figure as to place THE POST within the reach of all, and it will require but a little effort on the part of any one to secure enough subscribers at the very low rates we offer to make a club.

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THE POST is much lower in price than any other first-class family paper in the country, and we think it only needs to be laid before the community to be subscribed for at once by thousands to whom it may still be a stranger, save, perhaps, by reputation. Of course we must depend in a great degree upon our present subscribers, friends and readers to show THE POST to their acquaintances and neighbors, and to speak a good word in our behalf. Their return for such efforts must be the pleasure they give to others, the consciousness of assisting in the good work of circulating THE POST, and enabling us to make it better, more useful and entertaining than ever before. Will they try and do it for us? Let each of our present friends and subscribers try to get a few new subscribers at least.

Sample copies for the purpose will be sent to those who wish them.

Unreasonable Expectations.

As most of the unhappiness in the world arises rather from disappointed desires than from positive evil, it is of the utmost consequence to attain just notions of the laws and order of the universe, that we may not vex ourselves with fruitless wishes, or give way to groundless and unreasonable discontent. The laws of natural philosophy, indeed, are tolerably understood and attended to; and, though we may suffer inconveniences, we are seldom disappointed in consequence of them.

The progress of vegetation is not more certain than the growth of habit; nor is the power of attraction more clearly proved, than the force of affection or the influence of example. The man, therefore, who has well studied the operations of nature in mind as well as in matter, will acquire a certain moderation and equity in his claims upon Providence; he will never be disappointed either in himself or others; he will act with precision, and expect that effect, and that alone, from his efforts, which they are naturally adapted to produce.

For want of this, men of merit and integrity often censure the dispositions of Providence for suffering the characters they despise to run away with advantages which, they yet know, are purchased by such means as a high and noble spirit could never submit to. If you refuse to pay the price, why expect the purchase?

We should consider this world as a great mart of commerce, where Fortune exposes to our view various commodities—riches, ease, tranquility, fame, integrity, knowledge. Everything is marked at a settled price. Our time, our labor, our ingenuity, is so much ready money we are to lay out to the best advantage. Examine, compare, choose, reject, but stand to your own judgment, and do not, like children, when you have purchased one thing, repine that you do not possess another which you did not purchase.

Such is the force of well-regulated industry, that a steady and vigorous exertion of our faculties, directed to one end, will generally insure success.

Is knowledge the pearl of price? That may be purchased by steady application and long solitary hours of study and reflection. Bestow these, and you shall be wise. "But," says the student, "what a hardship is it, that many an illiterate fellow shall raise a fortune and make a figure while I have little more than the common conveniences of life."

Was it in order to raise a fortune that you consumed the sprightly hours of youth in study and retirement? Was it to be rich that you grew pale over the midnight lamp and distilled the sweetness from the Greek and Roman spring? You have, then, mistaken your path, and ill employed your industry. "What reward have I then for all my labors?" What reward! A large, comprehensive soul, well purged from vulgar fears, and perturbations, and prejudices, able to comprehend and interpret the works of man—of God; a rich, flourishing, cultivated mind, pregnant with inexhaustible stores of entertainment and reflection; a perpetual spring of fresh ideas; and the conscious dignity of superior intelligence. What reward can you ask besides?

"But is it not some reproach upon the economy of Providence that such a one, who is a mean, dirty fellow, should have amassed wealth enough to buy a nation?" Not in the least. He made himself a mean dirty fellow for that very end. He has paid his health, his conscience, his liberty for it; and will you envy him his bargain? Will you hang your head and blush in his presence because he outshines you in equipage and show? Lift up your brow with a noble confidence, and say to yourself: "I have not these things, it is true; but it is because I have not sought, because I have not desired them. It is because I possess something better. I have chosen my lot. I am content and satisfied."

The man whose tender sensibility of conscience, and strict regard to the rules of morality, makes him scrupulous and fearful of offending, is often heard to complain of the disadvantages he lies under in every path of honor and profit.

"Could I but get over some nice points, and conform to the practice and opinion of those about me, I might stand as fair a chance as others for dignities and preferment." And why can you not? What hinders you from discarding this troublesome scrupulosity of yours which stands so grievously in your way?

If it be a small thing to enjoy a healthful mind, sound at the very core, that does not shrink from the keenest inspection, inward freedom from remorse and perturbation, unsullied whiteness and simplicity of manners, a genuine integrity, "pure in the last recesses of the mind,"—if you think these advantages an inadequate recompense for what you resign, dismiss your scruples this instant, and be a soul-merchant, a director, or—what you please. If these be motives too weak, break off by times; and as you have not spirit to assert the dignity of virtue, be wise enough not to forego the emoluments of vice.

There is no one quality gives so much dignity to a character as consistency of conduct. Even if a man's pursuits be wrong and unjustifiable, yet if they are prosecuted with steadiness and vigor we cannot withhold our admiration. The most characteristic mark of a great mind is to choose some one important object and pursue it through life. It was this made Cæsar a great man. His object was ambition; he pursued it steadily, and was always ready to sacrifice to it every interfering passion or inclination.

LABOR in its various forms is the foundation of all comfort, all progress, all enjoyment, and even of life itself. Our food, our clothing, our dwellings, our schools, our government, our comforts, and the money which they cost, are all representatives of the hard work of many people in many places, and only thus could they exist. Yet work has other functions less widely recognized. It is valuable for its effects upon the worker himself. It strengthens his muscles, developes his powers, raises his courage, exalts his character. It is the pith and marrow of a happy, healthful life.

THERE is something even better than success within the reach of each of us, and that is the consciousness of having manfully striven, in spite of untoward circumstances, faithfully and cheerfully to do our duty in that state of life in which a merciful providence has cast our lot. This involves patience and endurance, courage and forbearance, and affords numberless opportunities for the exercise of true heroism.

IT is quite possible to cultivate good manners, without the least pretence or deceit, by merely expressing in pleasant ways every pleasant thing that is felt, and by cherishing that imaginative sympathy by which we discern the feelings and need of others. This much we owe to each other and to society. Only in this way can we add our quota to the general happiness and welfare.

KINDLY feeling begets kindly feeling; happiness cannot exist and exert its influence without conveying happiness to those around. We are all in search of the one great ideal, universal lasting happiness; therefore we should all join in doing our best to push on to the much-desired end, and in the meantime be content with the best that we can get.

NOT alone to know, but to act according to thy knowledge, is thy destination—proclaims the voice of my inmost soul. Not for indolent contemplation and study of thyself, nor for brooding over emotions of piety; no, for action was existence given thee; thy actions, and thy actions alone, determine thy worth.

ALL admit that a miser is not right to hoard his gold in a box when he might so invest it as to add to the welfare of multitudes. But every one does the same thing practically who holds in his own possession anything from which he cannot extract the value, thereby rendering it useless.

BY striving to obtain and to cherish clear and true ideas of right, by emphasizing them in our thoughts, following them in our conduct, and diffusing them through our influence, we strike the strongest and most effective blows at every form of wrong-doing.

How many of the troubles of life are really insignificant in themselves and easily avoidable! It is not so much, in most cases, great sorrows, diseases, or death, but rather "the little daily dyings" which cloud over the sunshine of life.

The World's Happenings.

Five thousand elephants a year go to make our piano keys.

Double-deck omnibuses are now running on Fifth avenue, New York.

Asbestos cloth is being used for wearing apparel by the firemen of Paris.

The first iron ore to be discovered in this country was found in Virginia in 1715.

An Ohio farmer dug 23 potatoes from 3 hills that aggregated 63 pounds in weight.

Michael Simon, the first Jew ever chosen for justice in Scotland, has been elected to that office in Glasgow.

A man in Maine has a hen which is sure death on a mouse. He claims that she often catches several a day.

Pigg is a probate judge in Ohio. Hogg is a member of Congress. Bacon is a custom-house officer at Toledo.

Fried mice for whooping cough once formed a very popular treatment in England, and in some districts do still.

Philip Honey, of Stafford, Va., hauls railroad ties regularly with a mule which he brought home with him from the army.

Birds of sombre plumage build open nests; the brilliantly-colored ones either have covered nests or build in holes in trees.

A turkey gobbler owned by a farmer near Rockville, Ill., fights hens from their nests and covers and hatches the eggs himself.

There is no way to temper brass except by hammering. There is no chemical or heating process for tempering anything but steel.

Edward Chadwick, of South Lyons, Conn., has been postmaster for 46 consecutive years, and has seen postage reduced from 25 to 2 cents.

Mrs. Annie Tomlin, of Morristown, N. J., lately received in a letter a $20 bill from a servant who had stolen the amount 10 years before.

A piano that had been in service for over a hundred years, and had music in it still, fetched but $1 at an auction the other day in Reading, Pa.

Members of the Vegetarian Society assert that fruit is the only perfect food, the apple alone being able to sustain life and health for a long time.

The buyer of a large Cincinnati tobacco house, who is paid $10,000 a year to know good tobacco when he sees it, neither smokes nor chews the weed.

A cucumber four feet long, coiled like a serpent and resembling nothing else so much as a green snake, was among the curiosities at the Maine state fair.

Abraham Burbank, who died recently in Pittsfield, Mass., worked all his life as a brick and stone mason, and at his death owned real estate valued at $1,000,000.

The New York Diet Kitchen furnishes the destitute sick through the various city dispensaries with nourishing food free of charge. It has been in active operation for 14 years.

Two men were arrested on the streets in Chicago the other day while carrying a parlor stove with a hot fire in it. They had stolen it from a room while the owner was out getting breakfast.

In some parts of Germany perch are caught and carried alive to market, sometimes a distance of 40 or 50 miles, and, if not sold, brought back to their tank or pond to await another occasion for sale.

The presence of mind of a West Chester, Pa., woman probably saved her life. Her clothing caught fire, and she immediately jumped into a barrel of water standing close by, extinguishing the flames.

A New York thief, who followed and abstracted from an express wagon a valuable package the other day at Cleveland, O., was killed a few moments after by a locomotive, in front of which he attempted to cross.

Cultivation has so affected the evolution of the tomato that the seeds are fast disappearing, and bid fair to cease entirely, as in the case of the banana, leaving the propagation of the plants dependent on the cuttings.

Under a recent decision of the North Carolina Supreme Court a Judge in that State has issued a warrant for the arrest of a man for committing an assault with a deadly weapon, "to wit, a certain vicious and large bulldog."

A Nashville man stood in a pool room undecided how to place his money. He glanced out of the window as a girl with red hair passed by, saw her, whirled around, bet his money on the only gray horse in the race, and won a big pot of money.

A lady of St. Helena, Cal., is the possessor of a hen which is somewhat of a curious creature. During six days of the week she is an usual producer of eggs, but when Saturday arrives she takes a lay-off, so to speak, as she has not been known to lay an egg on that day.

The wife of a Nevada, Mo., man had 10 young chickens. One day at noon a hawk pounced down upon them and carried off one, but did not go far before a lot of crows got after him. The next night at roosting time the lost chicken came home. It still bears the marks of the hawk, but is otherwise all right.

When the principal of a seminary for girls in Washington, Pa., started to take her scholars home from church the other Sunday evening, she found the usual crowd of young men waiting outside the doors. She made the girls go back, much against their will, and would not budge until a policeman, whom she sent for, made the bad boys go away.

An ex-convict in Boston, who lately served out a sentence for forgery and counterfeiting, has now announced his intention to reform and to embark in business for the sale of ink of his own invention, by the use of which he claims check raising will be impossible. The police authorities were notified in person of his plan, and one of the inspectors took him to several of the local banks and introduced him to the officers, that he might be given a start towards earning an honest living.

WHERE AND WHEN.

BY C. A. DAWSON.

Where the unsheathing needles of the larch
  Weigh, crimson-coned, the long, supporting spray,
And mingle to complete the fragrant arch,
  With lowly lilac and the snow of May,
A twain had trysted and the bending boughs
Stirred with the echo of a lover's vows!

When the ripe weight of leaning sheaves is borne
  In the last wagon, from the stubbly field,
And but the small red berry of the thorn
  Reminds the wanderer of the harvest yield,
A listener at even, hears the fleet,
Oft prayed-for echo of returning feet.

When the world hushes in enfolding snow,
  And icicles, depending from the eaves,
Weep in the wintry light; while Frost below
  His fairy fancies o'er the window weaves,
Twain linking life and love—"Till death us part,"
Know but the warm midsummer of the heart.

His Inheritance.

BY AMY LAYARD.

THE Rev. Clement Jenifer had inherited a property! The lawyer's letter announcing the fact lay before him, beside the breakfast which he had forgotten in the thought of this unexpected good fortune. It was not a meagre breakfast, although Mr. Jenifer, at five-and-forty, was still only a curate on a small stipend, for through the greater part of his twenty years in holy orders he had acted on the principle, that if he gave his time to the poor, it was as much as they could expect; and so if they called Parson Jenifer "hard" and "close," and preferred going to the vicar—why, that was not his fault.

His inheritance consisted in a good house and several hundreds a year, and he sat and thought over the difference this would make in his future. No more for him the daily service, read as a part of the day's work—no more visiting of thriftless, complaining, muddling poor, with whom he was completely out of touch—in a word, no more drudgery!

Twenty years of drudgery! That was what his life amounted to. Not for him the spirit of love that softens, and the high thoughts that sanctify, daily tasks; only the grudging gift of obligatory toil. It was written on his face, in lines marked by twenty years—no, not quite twenty—he had thought differently at first—but by more than a dozen years of discontent and repining. It was a pity, too, for the face was one of great possibilities, clouded over by the dulness of heart that fails to see through the service the Master who is served.

Even now he had no regret for the kind old friend who had left him a goodly share of his property, no thought that the hand which had ever been ready to help him and many another was helpless now henceforth, no spirit of gratitude for this last loving gift, only a selfish pleasure in his own good luck, and a feeling of discontent that it had been so long in coming. And thus thinking, he rose and went to see his vicar to make arrangements for the visit to the lawyer, which must precede his taking possession of his new inheritance.

He found no difficulty in obtaining leave of absence for the purpose. The vicar was a kind and open-hearted man, and pleased at his curate's unexpected prosperity.

"Well, Jenifer," he said, "I am very glad for you, though you can't appreciate it as much as if you had a wife and family dependent on you. All the same, you have my hearty congratulations."

"Ah," said Mr. Jenifer, "things generally come too late. Now, if this had happened when I was ten years younger, what a difference it would have made to me!"

"But your friend's life was a very valuable one to many, was it not?" said the vicar. "From all I have heard of him, I should think that even now, there will be plenty of people to say that the end has come ten years too soon, rather than too late."

"Why, he was nearly ninety!" said Jenifer, as if the fact were a reproach to the old man. Then he hastened away to make his preparations for leaving.

The vicar's wife came in as the curate went out. She found her husband gazing rather sadly into the dull street.

"Mary, my dear," he said, "it is my belief that after the miracles of the loaves and fishes, there were some amongst the five thousand who complained that the bread was stale, and the fish not so fresh as it might have been."

* * * * * *

Meanwhile Clement Jenifer was speeding on to London to see his lawyer. He found there was one condition which he must fulfil, before he could call himself master of house and income. Mr. Dacre had only willed Waterdell Hall to him under the proviso that he should pass one night in the house entirely alone.

Mr. Jenifer laughed when this clause was read to him.

"That's not a very hard thing to do," said he. "But was Mr. Dacre's brain softening when he made his will?"

"Not at all," answered the lawyer shortly. "Any one who saw Mr. Dacre in his last hours will tell you that the dear old man's mind was as clear to the end as in his best days. When you go to Waterdell, you will not please your poor neighbors there, if you suggest to them that the man who was so universally beloved and revered was crazy. I have no doubt this letter, which he instructed me to deliver so you personally, will explain the matter."

This was, however, not the case. The note was but a short one, and gave no reason for the testator's wish, except that he had inherited Waterdell Hall under the same stipulation, that he had ever been thankful for having carried it out, and hoped that though his friend Clement Jenifer was older than he himself had been when he came into the property ("for," he wrote, with a touch of his ordinary humor, "I have been, like Charles II., an unconscionable time a-dying"), yet, that a solitary night passed in his future home would prove as great a blessing to him, as it had been to the writer, and so, without further explanation, signed himself his affectionate friend, Thomas Dacre.

That was all. Clement Jenifer never liked being made ridiculous, and he thought that this will went very near that possibility. Yet he could not lose his inheritance for fear of being absurd, so after certain business instructions from the lawyer, he went to his hotel for that night, and next morning started for Waterdell. He put up at a little inn in the nearest market-town before proceeding to his destination, where, the lawyer had informed him, he would find all things in readiness to receive him for his lonely vigil, if vigil it was to be.

The inn was full of farmers of the neighborhood, come in to the market; and after much discourse on grain and turnips, the conversation, Mr. Jenifer found—he being, of course, unknown—turned on the death of Mr. Dacre.

"They do say," said one red-faced, grey-whiskered man of substantial appearance—"they do say that the ghost has begun to walk again since the Squire's death."

"What ghost?" asked a younger man with an incredulous laugh: "I never heard of a ghost at Waterdell."

"No, you mayn't," said the first man; "but I've heard tell from my father, times upon times, that before Squire Dacre come here, there were a power of queer things seen and heard at Waterdell; and they say, that since he's dead, they be come back."

"*They* say; *who* says?" asked a thin weasel-faced farmer.

"Well, my man Marvel for one; he went across by the spinney last night, where he has been almost every evening these thirty year, and he swears that he saw some one walking up and down the long path, and heard some awful noises."

"Ah!" said the thin man, with a grunt, "Marvel always were a liar."

"Liar or no liar," said the fat farmer rather angrily," my father saw the ghost himself sixty years ago: often and often he has told me of it; and I believe the old Squire knew of it too, for he never laughed or scoffed as some fools do" (with a significant sniff) "when folk talked of ghosts."

And so the talk drifted on to other matters, and Mr. Jenifer was left to contemplate another element of absurdity introduced into his well-arranged commonplace existence, and felt quite angry at the thought that he of all men should, by the irony of fate, be brought into a ghost story. But as he never had believed in ghosts, he did not mean to begin now; and after inquiring his way to Waterdell Hall, he found that he must start at once if he wished to reach there before nightfall.

It was a somewhat dull walk, which led him at last along a narrow road ending in an abrupt descent. The high hedges on either side had lost their summer beauty without yet gaining the glory of autumn; the few rose berries were sickly-looking and withered, and frosted with a whitish blight, and their leaves hung shivering on the twigs, whilst in the fields beyond the evening mists were already rising. The road turned sharply to the right, and then Waterdell Hall lay before its future owner.

To a cheerful eye it might have seemed nestling in a bower of greenery; but Jenifer, out of tune with things in general, and tired with his walk, saw in its withdrawal from the high road a guilty seclusion from observation.

Four tall Wellingtonians rose dark and solemn above the little wicket gate, and cast a gloom over the garden patch, in which some late geraniums and petunias only served by their touches of brilliant color to accentuate the general melancholy. The house itself, instead of boldly looking forth on the passers-by, turned its face away from the road, and had no prospect but the little bit of garden and the four sentinel trees.

The door stood open, and Mr. Jenifer entered a narrow passage where no welcoming footsteps came to meet his own; only a Virginian creeper torn by the wind tapped on the porch; otherwise all was still.

Mr. Jenifer looked round him for a moment, and then went through the silent house to the chief sitting-room. It was neither large nor high, but it had that individual charm which only age and years of occupation can give.

The old-fashioned mantel reached, with its dark rich carvings, to the ceiling, across which was a massive oaken beam, nearly black with age; the fireplace, with its glaring logs, gave out a cheerful glimmer, reflected in the small squares of the window opposite, over which hung a carven scroll, whose inscription there was not light enough to read.

Mr. Jenifer breathed a sigh of relief at the comfortable appearance here, in contrast to the depressing aspect of the rest of the house; but instead of settling himself (as he felt tempted to do by the fire, he again went out to look over the surrounding property.

Behind, the ground rose abruptly, and was bounded by a closely-growing coppice, through which a narrow path seemed to strike in the direction of the village. The parson climbed the hill, leaving the coppice on his left, and standing on the highest portion of the meadow, looked across the low hedge at the last pageant of the sunset.

Some elm trees were silhouetted against the sky, athwart which lay bars of rosy flame, tender and evanescent. One moment the dying light leaped up brighter and throbbed through all the burning heaven, and then suddenly it died away, and the day was not.

Jenifer turned and looked at the Hall. Already it seemed to be losing itself in the darkness which gathered round it, hiding in the recesses of the gables, drawing curtains of mist over the twisted chimneys.

The silence, entire and absolute, struck almost with oppression on the mind of this man accustomed to city noises; but even as he thought to himself "How still it all is," there sounded in the coppice close behind him a long, sobbing, moaning cry, which rose again, and then ceased.

Clement Jenifer was not a particularly tender-hearted or compassionate man, but that sudden cry filled him with a vague fear of some cruel deed just perpetrated—some awful mystery to be brought to light; and after a moment's hesitation he turned in the direction whence it had seemed to come, and found himself on a long path, with a thick yew hedge on either side.

Far ahead, in the dim twilight, he could descry a figure walking slowly away from him; he could hear a moaning sound, as of some one in pain.

Mr. Jenifer hastened his pace in order to come up with the sufferer, and as he gained on him, and could see him more distinctly, it seemed to him there was something familiar in the gait and bearing of the Unknown.

And as he so thought, the figure turned, and, facing him, advanced with slow, uncertain footsteps, wringing his hands as he came. *What* was it that struck Mr. Jenifer as so well known in him? What was it that filled him with sudden horror, and sent the blood back to his heart?

All the tales of ghosts and haunting noises at which he had scoffed so lately recurred to his mind, and yet there was nothing unearthly in the aspect of the man who was approaching him. And now they two stood face to face, and Clement Jenifer saw that this—he knew not what to call it—bore the face which he himself had borne twenty years ago, and he knew—though how, he could not tell—that he was standing face to face with the ghost of his own dead past.

Then ensued a conversation—strange, unnatural—between these two, who still were one; but whether the words were uttered on the evening air, or whether the knowledge of what was in the mind of each was mutual to both, it were hard to say.

"Why do I haunt you?" said this double of himself, gazing on him with reproachful eyes. "Do not murdered victims haunt their slayers, and have not you murdered that which was the best part of me? Where are the promises of your young days? Where are the aspirations, the desires after a higher life, the noble purposes with which my soul was filled? Dead—dead and buried beneath a crust of selfishness!"

"Youthful follies," answered Jenifer; "gone the way of all such early fancies. Why do you persecute me? Have I stolen, or murdered, or lived uncleanly? Have I not kept to my work and done it thoroughly, distasteful as it is?"

"It is true," said the other, "the commandments you have not broken; but where are the hearts you have helped to bind up? How many have you helped by your example? Rather, have you not by daily carelessness, by dryness of spirit, by perfunctory performance of your duty, quenched the light that *was*, aye, God knows it was, in me? And in doing so, you have wounded many another. There are sinners who slay the body, but you have slain your own soul; and woe be to him of whom this can be said."

Jenifer laughed in scorn.

"When I was what you are, all this would have had its terrors for me; now, I am not to be 'frightened with false fire.' I know what you are, who think to scare me thus—an illusion of the brain, a disturbance in the nervous system. Come daylight, and this will be as if it had never been."

But the other with the sad and youthful eyes looked at him in sorrow, and said—

"Even in your blindness you speak the truth; for when you were as I am, ere the world had dimmed your sight, you would have seen the precipice on which you stand. Oh, brother of me, though how degraded! give up your dreams of a selfish future; turn back while yet you may; use the wealth that has come to you, not for yourself only, but for others. Redeem the time that is left to you, and bring to a happier second life the promises, the aspirations of your youth."

"Begone!" said Jenifer. "If not an illusion, then you are an accomplice in some dark conspiracy to betray me into a rash vow. Did you and the old man who is in his grave plan it between you, and laugh to think how you would scare your foolish dupe? Away from me! and do not hope to work your will. I have inherited, and will enjoy!"

"Nay, then," said his double, "see to what an end your enjoyment shall bring you. I, whom you have destroyed, am what you were; see now what you shall be."

Then for one awful moment the parson knew that not only he himself stood there with the spirit of his once pure and earnest-hearted youth beside him; but a third and dreadful shape—himself as he should be, if no hand of grace stayed his downward course. The lightning flash of awakened perception showed him his own old age, where that which he had called economy had grown to avarice, where callousness had become cruelty—discontent, envy—carelessness, impiety.

He saw himself, degraded, mean, despicable, bad, without affections, without tenderness, without hope; and as the horror of it swept over him with resistless force, Clement Jenifer—the icy crust of years of life for self broken at last—fell upon his face, with the agonized cry of old, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

* * * * * *

When he came to himself, he was in the quaint old sitting-room in his new home. The fire had burnt low, and only dimly illumined the room; but as he gazed into the glowing embers, a hitherto unkindled log broke into flame, and as it leaped and flickered, the scroll which he had before remarked and failed to decipher caught and threw back the yellow light, and Mr. Jenifer read in letters of gold the poet's words—

"Nor deem the irrevocable Past
As wholly wasted, wholly vain,
If, rising on its wrecks, at last
To something noble we attain."

He sank on his knees, and there in contrition of spirit and anguish of soul dedicated anew to his Maker the years that should be granted to him, the wealth that he had inherited—himself, body, soul and spirit, for evermore.

People said afterwards that prosperity

had been good for Mr. Jenifer, that it had made him softer, more compassionate, more tender. He alone knew that the vision he had seen, had come only just in time, to save him from that utter ruin of soul to which he was tending; and when he thought, as many a time he did, of that awful night, he bowed his head in contrite humility, and gave thanks for the warning that had been sent him.

A Night Affair.

BY E. BREWER.

SINGULAR and improbable as the following adventure may appear, I must begin by saying that every word of it is true. I have neither added to the facts nor taken from them.

My husband and I were in Vienna and after looking through Bradshaw, we determined to return home by way of Trieste and Venice, stopping on the road at some point in Styria to break the journey and use the opportunity to see something of the lovely country.

So the next morning, Saturday, we were at the station by a quarter-past nine, where we were surprised to find a crowd of persons all taking tickets for the little quiet town we had decided upon as our resting-place.

Still our minds did not dwell upon the circumstance, as they were fully occupied by the thought of passing over the wonderful Semmering, of which we had heard so much.

What with the excitement and fatigue of the long journey, we were faint and weary when we reached the beautiful little town of Gratz at half-past seven in the evening. The number of people who got out at this station perfectly amazed us; but as the majority of them merely had a hand-bag they were soon through the waiting-room and away to the town, either on foot or in the few cabs which had been awaiting the arrival of the train.

We, who had luggage, were not so fortunate, but had to wait patiently until the slowest of country porters managed to deliver it in exchange for our tickets. Even when this was achieved we were compelled to wait for a return cab.

At length one arrived, and our large leather trunk was hoisted to the top. We told the man to drive to the "Hotel Elephant."

"Not a bit of use, ma'am," returned he. "It is crammed, and they have sent away every fare we have taken there to-day."

I went back into the station and asked the station-master if he could help us in our difficulty by telling us of any other decent hotel where we could get food and a night's rest.

He mentioned one or two, but doubted whether they would be able to take us in. The morrow, Sunday, was a Grand Festival, and Choral Unions from all parts of Austria had come to take part in it. Still, as he said, there would be no harm in trying.

Through the town and around the town we drove till it became so late that the streets were deserted and lights began to disappear from the houses.

I could bear it no longer. It was now nearly eleven o'clock. I stopped the cab and said: "Let there be an end of this. Drive to the Hotel Elephant, where we can at least get food, and rest in the dining-room."

This roused the man, and he replied:

"I've done the best I could, ma'am, but you see every place is full. I do know of a sort of hotel about a mile the other side of the town, where they would sure to be able to give you accommodation. The landlord is a friend of mine."

"Then why on earth did you not not say so before?"

"Well, because it is not fit for people like you; but it is better than nothing."

"Drive to it at once," I replied. And away we went.

We were soon out of the town, and for more than half an hour drove through dark wooded lanes and country roads, where not a house or a light could be seen.

"Where on earth are you taking us?" said I, putting my head out of the window.

"All right, ma'am," replied the man, "we shall soon be there."

"But it is not all right; we are more than two miles from the town already, and we will not go any farther."

"Only two minutes more," he persisted, urging on his horse; and I saw that he meant to have his own way.

At last the cab stopped before a long narrow building, and the driver, giving a peculiar whistle, a large, burly looking-man, with immense black beard and shaggy eyebrows, came out with a lamp in his hand, partly closing the door as he did so.

The coachman spoke a few words in a dialect I did not know, but which had the effect of bringing him to us. I asked if we could be accommodated for the night.

"Certainly," was the answer.

The box was lifted down; we paid an exorbitant sum for the use of the cab; and not until the cabman had driven off was there the least attempt to admit us into the low building. The landlord then gave orders to a couple of men who came out of the darkness to follow us with the box, after which he threw open the door and bid us enter.

We paused on the threshold, spellbound. The sight that met our eyes was so appalling that late though the hour, and weak and faint as I was, we should have run back to the town only that we knew that for the present, at least, our liberty was gone.

So we did the best thing possible under the circumstances: faced our position without, I believe, one particle of fear appearing in our manner.

The room was long and narrow, a number of small tables stood on either side with a narrow space between them for passing up and down. Seated at these were sixty or seventy men of all ages, from the youth of eighteen to the old man of seventy—the most repulsive, evil, ragged-looking creatures I had ever seen; all eating, drinking, smoking, singing, and swearing.

Our entrance seemed to cause unbounded astonishment, and in the moment's hush which followed, the landlord said in a thundering voice: "Gentlemen! I bring visitors."

Gazing round to notice the effect of these words, I saw that they had brought out a more hateful look of greed and savagery on their faces, especially so when they looked at the well-made trunk which was being brought in behind us.

At the end of this long room a door admitted us into a small, bare apartment, containing a table, two old chairs, and a stove, at which a repulsive old woman was cooking.

The atmosphere was sickening. Down we sat, however, our trunk besides us. I asked for coffee and something to eat to be served at once, and to be shown to our room.

"All in good time," was the half insolent rejoinder of the landlord as he left us. For a moment only I lost heart, but was roused by seeing my husband half fainting, for he was a great invalid, and our contretemps had worn him out.

The old woman, a greasy spoon in one hand, a fork in the other, and each hand resting on her hips, was regarding us with contempt and hate. Our eyes met.

"Give us water if you cannot give us coffee," said I, "and if you are a woman, help us. Show us our room."

The answer was an ugly laugh, as she turned to her frying-pan.

At this moment a girl entered for dishes of meat for the long room. At the first moment I scarcely took her for a human being.

Legs and feet were bare; she was a mass of rags, held together round her waist by a string; her neck and arms were also bare; her hair was black and came down to her waist in one mass of tangle. To crown all, she was black as a sweep.

She evidently had not known of our entrance, and her fear and despair at finding us there was evident.

Mixed with this was a sort of admiration. She came and knelt before me, looked up into my face, felt my dress, and catching sight of a diamond ring on my finger, gave a quick glance at the old woman. Seeing her busy frying, she made a rapid movement, exhorting me to take it off and hide it.

"Get up and take this meat to your master," was the command of the old woman the next moment.

As she was leaving the room, I said: "Pray help us, and bring us some bread and a glass of milk or water." The girl looked sorrowful and full of fear that she almost induced me to become a coward.

In a few minutes, however, she actually returned with some rolls and two cups of black steaming coffee, the smell of which was refreshing and reviving. As she put it before us she made a rapid sign that we were not to drink it, as it would make us sleep.

She brought us a little water in a jug, which we drank, and at the same time ate a roll.

After this we desired to go to our room, but the answer from the old woman was we were to be patient, and as soon as she had done cooking for the lot in the next room she would make the bed.

At length she departed, with a longing look at the box. In a few moments the girl made her appearance, put her hands together as if in prayer, and touching her eyes, showed us we must not sleep, and was off again in an instant.

My husband and I consulted together—I do not think he knew what fear was for himself—and we arranged that when we should be shown our room one must rest while the other kept awake, and so take it in turn.

We also came to the conclusion that the girl was our friend, for she had prevented our drinking the drugged coffee, and might possibly be able to help in some other way.

While we were thus talking the man came in. It was almost impossible to hear ourselves speak for the singing and shouting of the mob, removed from us by a thin door.

The man was evidently annoyed at our not having taken the coffee, and wanted to know what was the matter with it, at the same time looking searchingly at us. I told him it had been so long in coming that we should not sleep if we took it now, and begged him to hasten the preparing of our room.

He left, but returned in a few minutes, followed unconsciously by the girl. Our room was ready, and he hoped we should sleep well.

Turning sharply round he saw the girl, and in a fit of rage was about to strike her; but, recovering himself, said in a dialect he had no idea I could understand: "You little black imp, if you dodge my footsteps and interfere with me, I'll kill you! Be off to bed."

The room in which we were to sleep joined that in which we were sitting, and was at the extreme end of the long narrow building. The old woman gave us a small piece of tallow candle stuck in a bottle, and pointing to the room said, "It is ready;" then very reluctantly helped me in with our trunk, with more strength than I should have thought her capable of. Outside the door I heard her laugh, a low cruel laugh, but it sounded anything but reassuring.

At length we were alone—but where?

In a tolerably large room, as far as I could judge, with a door which would not lock; a window so high that we could not tell whether or not it was fastened, and which had a thick blind before it, so as to exclude all light. Two sides of the room were hung from the top to the bottom with suits of garments of every description, from a monk's to a mendicant's, evidently lent out on hire to the thieves and beggars who resorted thither.

In the room was a large chest of drawers, a rather heavy table, a couple of chairs, and a small iron bedstead, on which was a sack of straw, covered by a clean, coarse pair of linen sheets, and a dirty woollen coverlet.

The floor was bare of carpet, but very dirty, and there was neither chink nor cranny to admit a breath of fresh air.

Such was the room in which we found ourselves at one o'clock in the morning, with a considerable sum of money in our pockets, and some valuable jewelry I had brought, in consequence of having to appear in society in one or two of the capitals through which we had passed. A good, stout, sharp knife was our only visible protection.

Almost before we had made a survey of the room the candle was burning to its socket. This we could remedy if we desired, as we had matches and a wax candle in our bag. There was not a drop of water nor any sign of a wash-stand.

We both felt that if we escaped with our lives it would be by the mercy of God, in whom we trusted. How the deed was to be done we knew not, but that it would be attempted we were certain.

Our first work was to secure the door. We therefore drew, or rather carried the heavy table, and placed it quietly against it. On this we put the chairs, and in order to keep all firm we drew our trunk towards the legs of the table.

We noticed that the bed was placed quite close to the wall and that the dirty suits of clothes were dangling over it, so we removed it half a yard further into the room, and then, as quickly as possible, dressed as we were, lay down without a thought of sleep crossing our minds. We did not speak, but every sense was open to catch the slightest sound.

We had been reclining in this manner probably for half-an-hour, when we both felt that the bed was moving. In a second I was on the floor.

The bed seemed all right and we heard no noise, and I began to think it a trick of fancy, the result of over-strained nerves.

We lay down again, and in a few minutes the movement was repeated.

Again we were on our feet in a moment. "Thank God we moved the bed from the wall and so disarranged the machinery, otherwise we should have been in the cellars by this time," my husband whispered.

Nothing more happened for the present. A long time seemed to pass, probably not more than half-an-hour in reality, when our ears caught the sound of some one stealthily trying the handle of the door. Evidently there was surprise at meeting with opposition, for we heard a low whispering.

Again the handle was tried, but without effect. Presently there came a tapping at the door, at first gentle, then loud and peremptory.

"Have you your knife ready?" I asked my husband, and being assured of it, I answered in a sleepy tone, as if I had been awakened: "Who's there? What do you want?"

"Excuse me, lady," said a man's voice, "but I want something from the chest of drawers."

"Then you must wait till morning for it. We cannot let you in now. Good night." I heard the man utter an oath—again the knocking and again the demand for admittance. We knew well that the obstacle we had placed to their entrance could have been removed in a minute by a couple of strong men, so I made a virtue of necessity and called out:

"Well, if you must I suppose you must, but I won't have a man in the room. Send the old woman or the girl. We will admit one only and the second who enters we will shoot or cut down."

The answer came in the voice of the old woman:

"Then let me in. I want clothes for some people who are going away."

Cautiously we removed our barricade just sufficiently to let the woman enter. We were in darkness, but she had brought in a candle and the first thing that met her eye was our large knife with the blade drawn. She muttered and scowled while she went to the drawers and searched apparently for what she did not expect to find.

"Come, be quick," said I, as I saw her eyes peering to where the bed stood in darkness; "you disturb our sleep."

She would have struck me, I verily believe, but for the knife, which was held close to her until we had pushed her out of the door. It was evident that she came to find out why the bed had not sent us below.

Once again we barricaded our room, and once again we were alone.

It was about four o'clock on the Sunday morning when the voice of the landlord was heard peremptorily demanding admittance, as he required more of the suits of clothes hanging up in our room. Asking God's help, I drew near to the door and said:

"I believe you are the landlord, and if so listen: We are English people, and have the means in this room of protecting ourselves. Besides this, the station-master and railway porters know by this time where we are, for I specially asked their advice, and they will know how to identify the cabman who brought us here. You shall not enter the room. We will leave this place at seven o'clock and you will be wise to leave us in peace until then."

There was no answer, and quietly we waited, sitting on our trunk till six o'clock, when I boldly opened the door and went out in search of water to wash.

The old woman and three or four men lay in deep sleep in the room adjoining ours, and the door of the long room being open I stood for a moment looking at the sight. Men lay about in all directions, across the tables, on the benches, and on the floors.

I could find no one of whom to ask anything, till at length I spied the girl who had so befriended us. She swiftly and quietly followed me into our room, where she showed every sign of joy that we were alive and well.

She flew to get us water, but only brought us about a pint in a broken jug, and with it a piece of coarse brown bread. She had no idea we required the water for washing.

Of course there was no towel in the room, so we took a couple of clean handkerchiefs out of our bag, and dipping the corners of them into the broken jug wiped our soiled faces and hands, much to the surprise of the girl who was looking on. I put a bright new Austrian gulden into her hand and bade her keep it in memory of us; but it was now her turn to surprise us. Instead of hiding it and being delighted with it, as we supposed would be the case, she kissed it almost reverentially and laid it back in my hand, shaking her head the meanwhile.

The next thing was how to get away. We had merely the leather trunk and a hand-bag. The first was locked and strapped, and the other not too heavy for us to carry.

We took out a certain sum of money, which we thought would serve to pay our bill, before sending for the man, so as not to tempt him by the sight of the gold. On his appearing, I said: "Be so good as to make out our bill."

"I can tell you how much it is," said he; "we never make out bills here."

"As you please," I returned; "we shall not pay without."

With an evil countenance he went to do our bidding, and presently came back with a dirty envelope, on which was written, in German characters and money, a total of $5.

I was about to object, but my husband's hearty laugh at the audacious account made me think better of it.

We paid it, but before doing so I said:

"We leave in your care for a couple of hours our trunk, and it will be to your advantage that nothing happens to it. Be so good as to write on this envelope that you have it in your charge, and in exchange for the paper you will give up the box."

Taking up our bag, the man led the way through the long room. As we reached the door he made over the bag, saying, "I hope you will do us no harm. We have done the best we could. It was not a fit place to bring you to."

It was a lovely morning as we stepped out into the fresh invigorating atmosphere, and you may be sure our hearts were full of thankfulness for so merciful an escape. We made our way into the town, which we found to be nearly three miles distant from where we had passed the night.

We went direct to the Hotel Elephant, where we were received with every kindness and attention, notwithstanding our wretched appearance. The inn had not been full on the previous day, neither had they refused visitors, so we were the victims of our own carelessness.

A policeman went for the trunk, and it was delivered to us about an hour and a half after our arrival.

No one can ever imagine how we enjoyed the cleanliness and elegance of food and rooms, things which we take as a matter of course when no accident occurs to deprive us of them. We stayed for a few days, not only to see the lovely country but to recruit health and nerves, which had been terribly shaken by our Night Adventure.

INDIAN TOBACCO.—The Indians never smoke pure tobacco. It is always three-quarters adulterated with the "Red Willow," which is common along the western streams, a shrub about eight feet high called Killikinick, or a herb called Larb, which grows in the Rocky Mountains. They cannot smoke tobacco as a white man can: it is too strong for them. The Larb has a small leaf half as long as a willow, and grows on the side of the mountains as a small shrub. It is merely spread out to dry in the sun, and it is then crushed in the hand.

But with the Red Willow they cut switches or sticks three feet long, and, scraping off the red bark on the outside, they whittle the inner bark up in curls all along the stick, and then toast it over a fire until it is perfectly hard and dry. They then crumble it in their hands just as they do the Larb. They often make immense quantities of this to use, as it is always preferred in the spring of the year, when it is fresh. It has a very sweet flavor and odor, and it is very much sought after by the Indians.

My First Murder.

BY A. G. LEWIS.

I NEVER realized, until quite lately, what a lot of things the fellows who write books have to answer for. For instance, I am pretty sure I should never have thought of committing murder, but for [illegible] article in a certain magazine. It was entitled "The Curate of [illegible] side".

It set forth how a nice young curate, by name Walter Dene, of charming manners and artistic tastes—a man who showed the tenderest solicitude for little sick girls, and a touching consideration even for their aged grandmothers—was compelled by a pressure of circumstances, to murder his uncle. I had always had a prejudice against murderers, but I began to see that there might be another side to the question.

The story showed, in the clearest and most unmistakable manner, that Walter Dene really had no alternative. He had not the least wish to murder his uncle, but the old gentleman formed an obstacle to Walter's union with an amiable and deserving young lady, and it was absolutely necessary that he should be removed. Accordingly, Walter makes up his mind to remove him, and does so, stabbing him artistically in the back with a bowie-knife.

It shows the natural kind-heartedness of the man in, that having, in withdrawing the knife, accidentally wounded the paw of the murdered man's favorite spaniel, Walter Dene sits down quietly by the side of the corpse, and binds up the dog's wounded limb with his own handkerchief.

It was while at my dentist's that I read this story. I had reached this point when the folding-doors opened. My dentist appeared in the opening, with his usual crocodile smile, and beckoned me in. I had to lay down the story unfinished, and to this day I don't know what ultimately became of the tender-hearted murderer.

For the next half-hour or so, my attention was diverted from the subject by extreme personal discomfort, but on leaving the chamber of horrors and regaining the street, the history came back to me with renewed vividness.

I found myself examining Walter Dene's arguments for the suppression of his uncle with a sort of personal interest. For I, too, have an uncle. I, too, love (and am beloved by) a charming girl, and my uncle is the only obstacle to our union. I don't mean to say that he objects to it—quite the contrary; but the mere fact of his continuing to exist, and thereby retaining possession of his money, which would otherwise come to me, is an effectual bar to our happiness.

Dear Julia is a charming girl, but, like the young lady in the song, her face is her fortune, and it is hardly to be supposed that I, Benjamin Grylls, a clerk at $700 a year, could marry on that, even with the additional $600 my uncle allows me. Really, the parallel was wonderfully close. In some respects, indeed, mine was the stronger case.

The Reverend Walter Dene's uncle was not (save by the mere fact of his existence) objectionable. Mine was! Not to mention his disgusting habit of calling me "Benny", and cracking what he was pleased to consider jokes at my expense, he had sundry manners and customs which, to a delicate-minded person, were extremely offensive. He would wear an old serge jacket and carpet slippers, and not unfrequently he would come down to breakfast without collar or necktie, and not always in the cleanest of linen.

Now if there is one thing more than another on which I pride myself, it is my shirts. I always wear (uncle Thomas pays the laundress' bill) a clean shirt every day, and my cuffs and collars are the envy of all the fellows in our office.

When I entreat him to show more self-respect, and to buy himself half a dozen of decent shirts, the old reprobate actually has the coarseness to tell me he can't afford it.

"Ah, Benny, my boy," he often says, "you haven't an extravagant nephew to keep going, as I have."

And then he laughs till he chokes himself, and I have to slap him on the back to bring him to. I hate a man that laughs at his own jokes. And of an evening he drinks two tumblers of hot gin-and-water, and then he throws his handkerchief (colored cotton) over his head and snores. Surely if Walter Dene was excusable in getting rid of such a comparatively inoffensive uncle as his, I should be more than justified in removing mine.

Walter Dene was fully satisfied of the perfect propriety of his conduct, but he took care notwithstanding not to let the law into his secret, and so must I.

And so must I! Good heavens! was I actually planning the destruction of my innocent relative, from whom I had only that morning received a cheque for $100? Perish the thought!

And yet—there was Julia. Her happiness, surely, ought to be considered, and her happiness, or a very large portion of it, depended upon her being united to me. So that it really was not a question solely of my duty to my uncle, but of my duty to my uncle *versus* my duty to Julia. And then, myself, surely I was entitled to a little consideration.

As Walter Dene very neatly puts it, "Here was Christina's happiness and his own on the one hand, set in the scale against the feeble remnant of a selfish old man's days on the other."

For "Christina" read "Julia," and for "his own" "my own," and there you are! Then again, every one admits in these enlightened days that the greatest happiness of the greatest number is the true test of morality. Julia and I were clearly the greatest number, for we were two to one. Really, the arguments all pointed one way.

I tried to dismiss the matter from my mind, but it wouldn't be dismissed. I argued the matter seriously with myself—I tried to tot up my uncle's virtues and to see precisely what the world would lose by losing him.

He was good-natured—I felt bound to admit that much in his favor. Secondly, he was honest; though there wasn't much credit in that, seeing that he had no temptation to the contrary. Thirdly, he was—he was——— No, for the life of me I couldn't think of any other virtue that he could fairly claim credit for. Two virtues all told.

And was a man with this paltry allowance of moral recommendations (terribly set off, *per contra*, by his red cotton handkerchief, his crumpled shirt-front, and his vulgar jokes)—was a man like this by his continued existence to divide two loving hearts. Clearly not. My course was plain, whatever the violence to my own feelings. My uncle must die.

This being settled, the next question was, "How?" I could not bring myself to prod the old gentleman with a bowie-knife, as Walter Dene did with his uncle. Stabbing has always seemed to me a clumsy mediæval sort of way of getting rid of an enemy. It is apt, moreover, to leave tell-tale spots upon the operator's pantaloons. Firearms were equally out of the question.

I never fired off anything in my life save a penny cannon in early youth, and then, I remember, the deadly weapon flew backwards and broke the wash-house window. The fact is impressed on my memory, because the breakage cost me most of my hard-earned pocket-money. Poison would have been more in my line; but a gentleman can't take anything to disagree with him nowadays without those confounded analytical chemists poking their noses into his inside and finding out what he last took for supper.

After mature consideration I decided to get him run over, and accordingly inveigled him down to the Bank in the busiest part of the day, gave him a heavy luncheon, with two or three glasses of port and port, and then steered him neatly into the middle of the traffic, right in front of a passing hansom. As luck would have it he saw his danger just in time, and escaped it by a hairs breadth.

My own attention had been so much absorbed by the hansom that I had not noticed an omnibus immediately behind me. I was knocked down and all but run over myself, and my uncle took me home, terribly bruised and shaken, in the very hansom which I had intended to be the instrument of his promotion to a better world. To add insult to injury, he lectured me all the way home, in a thick, port-winey voice, on the necessity of being more careful in crossing busy thoroughfares.

I was in bed for a week, and consumed arnica enough to stock a drug store before I could move about with any degree of comfort. Meanwhile, however, I had had leisure to perfect my plans, and had the good fortune to hit upon a method of extinction which would be both sure and painless. I had seen a medical man of my acquaintance destroy an injured poodle with chloroform, and was struck by the simplicity of the process.

He poured a little fluid on a handkerchief, held it to the dog's nose, and, after one or two inspirations, the animal rolled over on its side dead. I resolved to chloroform my uncle after the same manner.

Accordingly, I purchased a small quantity of the liquid, and, watching my opportunity, when the old gentleman, having imbibed his customary gin-and-water, threw his handkerchief over his head and went to sleep, I cautiously moistened the handkerchief with the chloroform, letting the wetted portion of it hang down well over his nose.

He breathed rather more stertorously than before, but otherwise he made no sign. Presently the stertorous breathing grew fainter and fainter, and at last ceased altogether.

All was over, and I began to consider what would be the best method of communicating the unfortunate occurrence to the [illegible] I had intended whether to [illegible] and say that my uncle [illegible] or to [illegible] and leave somebody else to [illegible] painful discovery. I finally decided on the after course and was just leaving the room when the supposed dead man suddenly sat up with a snort.

"Hallo! Dear! Dear! What's this horrible smell of rotten apples?" Then, finding it was my own handkerchief that smelt, he flung it from him, saying, "Why, Benny, you rascal, you've been up to your tricks again. You've been putting some of your nasty peppermint stuff on my handkerchief. I could have given me quite a headache."

I was only too glad to snatch at the suggestion; I owned the soft impeachment, and promised not to play such a trick again. My uncle had another glass of gin-and-water in consideration of his headache, and we retired to rest.

How my uncle slept I can't say, but I had uncomfortable dreams of a public ceremonial, in which the sheriff, a rope, a gentleman in clerical attire, and myself played prominent parts.

I came down to breakfast feeling horribly seedy and low-spirited. My uncle, on the contrary, was quite jovial, and in unusually spruce array.

"What a swell you are this morning!"

"Ah, I'm a moneyed man to-day," he replied. "I'm going into the city to draw my annuity."

"Your what?" I exclaimed.

"My annuity. The fact is, Benny, my boy, you and I are such gay young dogs that I found I was living beyond my income, and dipping into the capital. That's a sort of amusement that don't last long, you know, and I like to be on the safe side. So the other day, when I was in the city, I just walked into one of the big insurance offices, and sunk the little lot in an annuity. Three thousand a year they give me; so as long as I live, Benny, my boy, you and I are sure of our little pocket-money. By the time I go off the books—which won't be for another twenty years or so, I hope—no doubt you'll be pocketing your thousand a year, and won't want it."

Good heavens! what an escape I had had! If I had carried out what I now felt to be my unnatural design, I should positively have been the poorer man, instead of the richer, for my success. But it will be a lesson to me for the future. Come what may, I have made up my mind that I will never attempt to assassinate anybody again.

My first murder shall also be my last. Professionals may find assassination pay, but I am quite sure that amateurs had better keep clear of it. At best it is an expedient that can only be justified by absolute necessity, and an error of judgment may place you in an extremely painful position.

In my own case, for instance, the suppression of my uncle, which appeared so eminently desirable, would in reality have been quite the reverse, and if I had succeeded I should never have forgiven myself. Henceforth I intend to devote my best energies to cherish my worthy relative's declining years, and keep him alive as long as I possibly can.

I have already suggested his devoting a reasonable portion of his annuity to a good heavy insurance on his own life. If I can only induce him to do this my mind will be at peace. At any rate, whatever happens, I shall have done my duty.

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

A recent fashionable controversy has brought out the fact that several fashionable New York matrons who travel abroad at frequent intervals are looked to by their transatlantic society friends to negotiate matrimonial alliances for them in this country. Social attentions at aristocratic houses abroad are paid for, when the scions of the house visit New York, by deftly planned introductions there, which are tactfully advanced, as far as possible, toward pecuniary and hymeneal settlements.

A jolly party was sitting around a table at a restaurant at Frankfort-on-the-Main, Germany, talking about the numerous theft of fall overcoats which had lately been reported from every part of the city. They all agreed that such a thing could not possibly happen to any one of them, as they had their eyes wide open. "Nevertheless," interposed a gentleman sitting at the next table, "I would, if need be, undertake to prove that any one of your coats could easily be extracted from under your very noses." They were astonished, but he explained that it was only necessary to engage a man in an interesting conversation, and while he continued under the influence to arise, take his overcoat, put it on, light a cigar and leave the room with a gracious bow. The entire company kept up a continuous roar of laughter at the amusing tale and the still more entertaining practical illustration with which the relator accompanied his words and walked out of the door. He did not come back, neither did the overcoat, with a pocket-book with $100 in it.

"As a rule," says a writer in a New York exchange, "the aged blind among the poor maintain themselves, and perhaps contribute to the support of the family by begging, being led to their accustomed places on some frequented thoroughfare by the married son or daughter with whom they dwell on their way to work in the morning and back again on their return in the evening. It is a fact that cannot escape observation that the blind men predominate; that there are to be a countered in a stroll ten blind men to one blind woman beggar, and patient inquiry reveals the fact that blindness is as rare among women as baldness. The writer has only discovered three blind women seeking alms to the thirty blind men he has encountered on the populous thoroughfares of the east and west side. The hunters on the prairies allege as one reason for wearing their hair long that it preserves the eyesight, and perhaps we may find in the similar custom of women an explanation of the fact that blindness is comparatively so rare in the sex."

The best method for checking desertions is still a problem to army officers. Desertion has diminished of late, but still about three thousand men desert annually. The bulk of the army is stationed in the growing West, and bright men in the ranks see the immigrant or new settler growing rich, while they are compelled to await the lapse of years before they receive an increase of pay. Many men who would be contented in the fitted-up East become restive in the West and desert. Adjutant General Drum suggests that soldiers discontented with the service be allowed to purchase their discharge for a fixed sum. This is to Americans a radical suggestion, but is a method in vogue in some foreign services, and is reported to work well. Military authorities are the more troubled about desertion now because never in its history did the regular army contain finer material in its ranks than it contains today. It is just this element, intelligent young men who enlisted during the business depression of a few years ago, who sigh for an opportunity to return to civil life and avail themselves of the opportunities it presents.

An extraordinary occurrence is reported from Summertown, Clarendon county, S. C. A colored girl, 17 years old, who had been ill several days, died last Wednesday. The body was properly prepared and dressed for burial and placed in a coffin, the negroes of the neighborhood [illegible] their last rites by "sitting up" over the corpse on Tuesday Wednesday night. The funeral services were held in the colored church on Thursday afternoon, and the body was to be interred in a graveyard about two miles distant. When the cortege had reached a point within fifty yards of the cemetery, the pall-bearers were startled by a crying noise, something resembling the mewing of a cat, apparently emanating from the coffin. The procession was halted, and, after considerable discussion, it was resolved that the coffin should be opened. Upon removing the lid it was found, to the great consternation of the funeral party, that the woman was alive, but unconscious, and that a new born babe shared with her the narrow bed. Several of the pall-bearers and mourners were terror-stricken and fled. Those who remained, however, administered to the wants of the woman and her infant, and in a short time both were taken to a neighboring house, where they received kindly and necessary attention. At last accounts the mother was doing well, there being every indication of her complete recovery, whilst the infant is hearty and robust and is flourishing as well as any picaninny born under ordinary conditions and circumstances.

As an exaggerated unselfishness must be regarded as a fault, inasmuch as it engenders and encourages the worst form of selfishness in others, too good a listener may do harm to his fellow-men. Many a long-suffering person, who has something to say that would be really worth hearing, has [illegible] become, as the reward of his patience, a mere [illegible] for the operation of [illegible] peculiarities. The [illegible] says, "Live and let live is fair play," a maxim very ripe only to the art of listening when the [illegible] is concerned. [illegible] rise and settle the matter by [illegible] at once.

There is no beautifier of complexion or form or behavior like the wish to scatter joy and not pain around you.

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Our Young Folks.

ETHEL'S CRUISE.

BY H. B. D.

"PAPA, will you please tell me the time?" and Ethel Kingston popped her bright golden head in at the study window.

"Half-past twelve, my dear," her father replied, consulting his watch.

"Oh, dear! it was twenty minutes past ever so long ago!"

"Just ten minutes ago, my dear. You must learn to be patient. Run away now, and do not disturb me again till Bertie comes. I'm busy this morning."

Ethel wandered into the garden, then crossed the pretty lawn that sloped to the river, and stood looking at the beautifully wooded banks on the other side.

"I know there are lots of water-lilies there," she said aloud. "I do wish Bertie could get me some. I wonder if he will like Sunnyside? It must be one o'clock now," and she hurried to the gate and looked eagerly down the road.

In a few minutes a dog-cart came in sight, and without waiting for the vehicle to stop, a bright-haired boy swung himself down, and Ethel seized him in her arms, and kissed his rosy face.

"Bertie, darling, I'm so glad you have come! Sunnyside is a lovely [illegible] river in front. Papa takes us out in the evening sometimes, and there are such delightful walks, and flowers, and birds' nests. And the garden is full of fruit, and a donkey, and three cows, and pigeons, and rats! They [illegible] me. I have been on the look-out for you ever since eight o'clock this morning."

"And I've been coming since long before that, and I'm so hungry. Is dinner ready?" said Bertie, interrupting her.

"I suppose it is," Ethel said a little indignantly. "How can you think of dinner when I have not seen you for ages, and have so much to tell you?"

"But I'm hungry, Ethel," said Bertie, humbly; "and I want to see papa and Nurse Ackers, you know."

"Bertie, you've become selfish and greedy," Ethel replied with a pout. "You think more about nurse's tarts and short cakes than about me."

"Of course," Bertie said calmly, "when a boy comes home after being away for three months, and half starved, he likes to get something nice."

"Oh, Bertie! come on, dear—quick! I'm certain nurse has something nice," said Ethel, and hurried him towards the house. "You will like Sunnyside, I know; its twenty times nicer than London, and papa is writing a new book, and I've got something or other. He's very busy, so we can spend our holidays just as we like."

"But where's Miss Weston?" Bertie asked.

"Gone for a month."

"Oh, Ethel! how splendid!"

"And Jenkins is away, too. He's seeing to the house at home. There's only cook, and nurse, and Jerry, the gardener, here, and two other women."

But before Bertie could reply they reached the [illegible], where Mr. Kingston was waiting for them.

Bertie was not such a privileged person as Ethel, and met his father's [illegible]; but he promised to be a good boy, take care of his sister, enjoy his holidays, and not get into mischief, in a manly way that made Mr. Kingston smile.

Then nurse came to say that dinner was waiting, and Bertie, at least, was ready to do it full justice. Ethel was too excited to eat, and kept telling her brother all about the joys and delights of Sunnyside.

It was a very pretty spot, beautifully situated on the banks of a river, and Mr. Kingston had taken the house furnished for the summer, in order that he might finish some literary work in quietness.

Ethel and Bertie were his only children, and they lost their mother when Bertie was quite a baby. Nurse Ackers had been a most devoted attendant to them all their lives, and Miss Weston, a relative of Mr. Kingston's, a kind but firm governess, so that on the whole, the children escaped being spoiled, in spite of their father's indulgence and pre-occupation.

But Miss Weston was gone for a holiday to see a friend who was ill, and Jenkins, the butler, who ruled the house, the master excepted, was in London, so Ethel and Bertie would be at liberty to enjoy their holiday according to their own devices for the first time in their lives.

With Bertie to aid her, Ethel first thought there could be no limit to their excursions—no end to their adventures. Only one point Mr. Kingston had been very explicit and firm about. Ethel was forbidden to go to the boat-house, or go on the river without her father.

Bertie was not unruly, but he followed his sister blindly and admiringly, and when after dinner she proposed they should visit the farmyard, he went at once.

There they found an empty wagon, with two great brown patient horses standing at the farm door. In a moment they climbed up, Ethel shook the reins, Bertie cracked the whip, and the horses started off for the gate, which was fast, and the team pulled up suddenly, without doing any great damage to themselves, but shaking and startling the children considerably.

However, they managed to escape before Dick came up to scold his run-away horses, who were not in the least to blame, and then Ethel proposed they should go to the kitchen garden and pay a visit to old Jerry, who was at any time delighted at seeing visitors enter his domain.

But there were bees there, and two dogs, and a hedgehog, and it was necessary to introduce Bertie to them all. The gate was fastened, and even Ethel was not courageous enough to ring the bell.

"Never mind," Bertie said; "I'm used to climbing over the garden wall at school after the cricket ball."

And Ethel saw him mount to the top with rapture, which was changed to dismay as she heard an ominous crash from the other side. Poor Bertie had fallen into the middle of a cucumber frame!

"I think perhaps we had better not go in after all, Bertie, for fear we should get into mischief," Ethel whispered, as Bertie opened the gate, and showed a scratched knuckle and torn jacket. "Let us go for a walk."

Bertie assented, not caring to encounter the gardener, after the ruin of the frame, and they hurried away, leaving the gate wide open.

Presently Neddy, a favorite donkey, happening to observe the unusual and defenceless state of the kitchen garden, wandered in, and was soon enjoying a hearty meal of young lettuces and trampling down late peas and onions.

Ethel and Bertie, with a feeling of having been very good, next wandered along the banks of the river, in the opposite direction from the boat-house; and when, after walking for about a quarter of a mile, they espied a pretty little canoe moored to a tree, Ethel got in without a moment's hesitation.

"Let us go and get some lilies, Bertie!" she cried.

As both children were naturally fearless, and knew a little about canoeing, they were soon in the middle of the stream. Ethel tried to make for the opposite bank, but the current carried them down farther than she meant to go; but at length they reached a spot where there was the most exquisite lilies.

"Oh, how splendid!" Ethel cried, gathering the blossoms by handfuls. "Look, Bertie, at those lovely grasses. This is fun, Bertie."

"Glorious! But we must get back, Ethel. See how dark it is, and the people may want their boat."

"Of course; I never thought of that. Just one more handful, Bertie, and then we will start."

But starting was no easy matter; the canoe was fast in the middle of a bed of lilies, tangled river weeds and grasses, quite under the shadow of the trees, and the children were unable to go backward or forward, the paddles only caught the long fibres and splashed them heavily.

Then, quite suddenly, there came a heavy shower of rain, which soon soaked them through, followed by some heavy peals of thunder, that echoed from over the hills.

Ethel cried aloud in terror; Bertie put his fingers in his ears and shivered as the wind shook the rain-drops from the trees, and deluged them both like a shower-bath.

"Oh! Bertie; what shall we do?" Ethel cried, losing all her courage.

"Go home when the storm is over," the little fellow said bravely. "Don't cry, Ethel. If we can't cross some one will be sure to come after us. It's just like Robinson Crusoe!"

"Not a bit," Ethel said decidedly. "It's [illegible]."

Bertie thought so too, and despite his valor he threw his arms around his sister's neck and burst into tears, so they clung to each other, wet, cold, tired, hungry, and terribly frightened, expecting that some terrible disaster would befall them before long.

Meanwhile the lady and gentleman who owned the canoe had gone a little way sketching, and returned just in time to see it disappear under the trees on the other side. The storm was coming on fast, so they hurried up to Sunnyside and asked for shelter, explaining their situation.

"Where are the children?" Mr. Kingston asked, the moment he heard of the missing canoe.

Nurse had to say that she had seen nothing of them since dinner.

"That madcap lassie of mine must have ventured across the river, no doubt to show her brother that she knows something of paddling. I must get out a boat, and go at once after them. You say you saw the canoe on the other side?"

"Yes, under the trees. I'll go with you," the strange gentleman said; and in a few moments they were rowing across the river.

Ethel saw them first, and screamed aloud—"Papa!" And then Bertie screamed too, and they both began to cry and laugh, and wave their hats.

"Sit still, dears, or we'll [illegible] you," Mr. Kingston said shortly, and in a very few moments the larger boat was among the weeds too, but being manned by strong arms the lilies and grasses made but a feeble resistance.

In about half an hour the children were safe at home, and the lady and gentleman had gone away in their boat, which was none the worse for its voyage.

After changing their wet clothes and having some tea, Mr. Kingston called both his children into the study, and spoke to them very seriously.

"You have only been home four or five hours, Bertie, and yet see how much mischief you and Ethel have managed to do: start on [illegible] your train, turned the [illegible] kitchen garden, [illegible] your lives, terrified us all very much. Now, what am I to do with you? What punishments do you deserve?"

"It was all my fault, papa; Bertie is not a bit to blame," Ethel said earnestly. "I am very sorry, because I did not mean to be naughty or disobedient, but please punish me only. Bertie only did what I asked him."

"I promised to take care of Ethel, papa, and not get into mischief," Bertie said, "so the fault is mine."

"You are both to blame; so I have sent for Miss Weston; she will be here to-morrow, and I think and hope I shall hear of no more such adventures. Now good night, and let me have no complaints during the remainder of the holidays."

"Good night, papa; but the holidays are over, and we've had only one," Ethel said sorrowfully, as she went to bed; "and I promise never to go canoeing again; I've made my first and last cruise."

ROASTING BOB

BY PIPKIN.

IF a bear was to come into the garden I'd just take the gun hanging up in the study, and aim at him like this—and click! he'd roll over dead, and we'd have his skin for a mat!"

Oh, Bob, you know you wouldn't you'd be far too 'fraid. Why, you're always afraid of Mrs. Bryce's jackdaw, and a bear's far worse."

"No, I'm not," said Bob, stoutly. "If the jackdaw tries to peck my legs again I'll just catch him by the neck and throw him away, like Tom did."

I am afraid Bob was rather given to bouncing; but as he was a little fellow, only six on his last birthday, perhaps he did not know how foolish it was. He and Mary were waiting on the terrace outside the front door for nurse, who was going to take them for a walk.

Uncle Walter had been telling them at dinner of the bear he shot when he was travelling in Russia; and Bob's little head was filled with thoughts of shooting bears, and distinguishing himself like his uncle. I don't think he meant to say what was not true.

He did not think, that was all. As he walked along the path with his hands in his pockets, kicking up the stones, he almost wished a bear would come into the garden, that he might show Mary how wrong she was to suppose he would be afraid.

"Now, Master Bob, I'm ready," called nurse from the hall door, and he had to cut short his reverie, and follow nurse and Mary down the drive and into the lane.

"Let me see," said nurse; "I've got to leave a message at Mrs. Bryce's first, and then we might go on to the field where we saw all the cowslips yesterday, and get a bunch for mother."

At the mention of Mrs. Bryce, Mary glanced laughingly at Bob, who was walking on nurse's other side. But he was looking straight on the other way.

Mary was two years older than Bob and had more sense. But I am afraid she was rather fond of teasing her little brother, and was sometimes not very kind.

It was not quite fair of her to laugh at Bob for being afraid of the jackdaw, as she herself was protected from his attacks by long black stockings. Bob wore short socks, and his bare legs always attracted Mr. Jack's attention, and he could never resist giving them a sly peck.

So when they got to Mrs. Bryce's gate, which was not very far from their own, nurse said:

"You'd better wait for us here, Master Bob. Won't be long." But as per usual Bob [illegible] Mary's and Bob's motto.

"I'm not afraid of the old jackdaw," he said, boldly.

"Oh, very well," said nurse. "Just you kick him if he comes near you, and show you're not afraid, and he'll go off."

But Bob's courage began to forsake him as soon as he had spoken. How bold he had felt a few minutes ago, when he imagined himself seizing the jackdaw by the neck, as he had seen Tom the stable boy do, and flinging it from him; and how little of that boldness he felt now as he walked up the path, keeping close to nurse's skirts, and trying hard to look unconcerned.

"Why are you keeping so close to nurse?" said Mary, mischievously, as they stood at the hall door after having rung the bell.

Bob looked conscious, and let go of nurse's dress, and walked a step or two away with [illegible] dignity.

Just then the door was opened, and nurse entered into conversation with Mrs. Bryce's maid.

Bob thought, "If nurse is only quick we shall easily get away without the jackdaw seeing us at all."

Alas! his tormentor had already spied them, and was hopping towards them looking very determined and impudent. Bob walked off a few steps towards the gate, overcoming by a great effort his impulse to run, and fervently hoping his bare legs would escape notice. But no such thing.

The jackdaw hopped steadily on, with his wicked-looking eyes fixed unmistakably on Bob's nice [illegible] legs. How inviting they looked! and how good he felt that there were none of those big protecting stockings to [illegible].

Nurse was busy engaged talking to Mrs. Bryce's maid, and Mary was [illegible] to hear conversation, so that they [illegible] of the jackdaw, or they might have [illegible] both on his way to [illegible].

On he came, hop, hop, holding his head now on one side, and now on the other, and in another minute Bob felt a sharp dig in his leg. It was Bob's turn to hop now; he took up the pecked leg and rubbed it, while he flourished his clenched fist at the enemy.

But the jackdaw dodged him cleverly, and gave a vicious peck at the other leg. Then Bob gave a vigorous kick at him, first with one foot and then with the other. The jackdaw merely fluttered a little, spread his wings to steady himself, and made another plunge, and this time gave really rather a hard peck.

Then, with a suppressed scream of "Get away!" our hero took to his heels and tore down the path. Nurse and Mary turned at the shout in time to see the jackdaw in hot pursuit of Bob, who was running as fast as his little legs would take him.

On they tore, through the gate and along the lane, the jackdaw flying and hopping behind, and every now and then dodging Bob's heels and giving a prod at the bare legs.

Mrs. Collins, Bob's mother, was sitting in the drawing-room working, with the large window that looked on to the lawn wide open, when she was startled by her little son bursting in through the window with a jackdaw at his heels, and throwing himself into her arms, while he looked round terrified to see if his tormentor still followed.

"My darling boy, what is the matter?" and Mrs. Collins threw her arm around Bob and flipped at the jackdaw with her work.

Mr. Jack backed hesitatingly, and then, as Mrs. Collins beat at him again, he seemed to make up his mind that discretion was the better part of valor, and hopped out of the window and on to the lawn.

Nurse and Mary, who had followed breathlessly, met him as he went out, and sped him on his way with a stick, and then rushed into the drawing-room to see what had happened to the poor little victim.

"I don't think he has quite killed you, my son," said his mother, examining the little legs, which bore only a few slight scratches from Jack's beak. "But what a foolish little boy you were not to wait at the gate, when you know Mr. Jackdaw can never resist having a peck at your little bare legs."

Bob said nothing. He looked flushed with his run, and half inclined to cry; but he kept back his tears bravely, and Mary answered for him.

"Mother, it was because Bob thought he could kill a bear like Uncle Walter, and I said he couldn't because he was afraid of the jackdaw, and then he said he was not, and so he came up to the door with nurse and me, and he didn't say anything, so we didn't know the jackdaw had come," ending with "never mind, Bobbie," and she put her arm around her little brother's neck. "Come into the nursery, and I'll read you a story out of my new fairy-tale book."

I don't think little Bob was quite cured of boasting at once. But I do know that he checked himself once or twice after this when he was beginning to tell of the brave things he would do; and though no one was unkind enough to remind him of his run from the jackdaw, I think it was the thought of it that stopped him.

When he grew big enough to wear stockings he went again to Mrs. Bryce's, and the jackdaw on the occasion was quite friendly. He showed no desire to peck at his legs. He even condescended to eat biscuit out of his hand, and they were ever after on the very best of terms.

CUT-GLASS.—In making cut-glass, the articles are always blown, not pressed. Goblets, wine-glasses, finger-bowls, &c., are made "off-hand"—that is, they are blown and shaped by hand, the only tools used being a blowpipe and the gaffer's tool. Oval and irregular shaped articles are blown into proper moulds having smooth surfaces, the moulds serving merely to give the shape, and not to impress any pattern. All articles leave the glass-maker's hands with a smooth surface, and in this state they are called to wheels adapted to the work.

Every line is then "smoothed" on stone wheels, and finally buffed and polished with crocus and rouge on leather and linen wheels. The essential difference in cost and appearance between cut and other varieties of table-ware is that in the former the pattern or design is entirely cut out of the solid mass of the glass. A pressed article, though it were smooth and polished over, would not be properly called cut-glass, nor would it look at all like a genuine cut piece.

VALUE OF WORK.—We need to implant the habit of work and infuse the sense of its value in all our youth—not only for what it will bring to them, but even more for what it will effect in them, should they be taught to honor and welcome it. If it has, in their eyes, only a money-value, if it is worth only that, it will not be strange that, if they can secure the same things in other and easier ways, they should feel absolved from its claims. But, if they are made to see that it has a still higher mission to perform; that it is the source of health and happiness, honor and usefulness; that without it they can never hope to rise to their true dignity as men and women, or attain any real value in the community—then in the coming generation there will be no room for the idler, and no toleration for him who, having hands to work with or brains to think with, is willing to drag on a torpid and useless existence at the expense of others' hands and brains. M. S.

Sometimes it is extremely hard to tell where frankness ends and impudence begins.

EXCHANGES.

BY J. B. S.

You praise my beauty, grace and art,
O Love; but you are much to blame:
In every line you leave a smart,
That makes me bow my head in shame.

Whate'er the world may choose to say,
I look not for such words from you:
I'd throw them from my heart away,
If you could even prove them true.

World's praise is but a passing mood,
That shifts about with the occasion;
It serves as oil for envy's food,
As that of honest admiration.

In your regard, I set no store
On what, by way of form or feature,
I hold in common, less or more,
With every other human creature.

If Love be blind, as it is said,
What can he know of outward graces?
I care not for the love that's led
A facile slave of pretty faces.

I would not have my love depend
On beauty, were I ten times fairer.
If beauty knew no change or end,
Life asks for something deeper, rarer—

Something that sets the world aside,
Beyond the touch of time or season,
If only love for love abide,
I do not want another reason.

AT ONE'S OWN HAND.

Under the above head, we comprehend suicides by novel methods, as well as suicides from strange or ridiculous motives.

The most remarkable suicide of ancient times was that of the poet-philosopher Empedocles. He, to be thought a god, and that his death might not be known, threw himself into the crater of Mount Ætna. The fact was not discovered until some short time afterwards, when one of his sandals was thrown up.

This feat has been paralleled in modern times, for in 1834 an English lord threw himself into the crater of Mount Vesuvius.

Zeno, the founder of the sect of Stoics, seems to have acted up to the principles which he professed. It is said that, as he was going out of his school one day, at the age of ninety-eight, he fell down and put a finger out of joint. When he reached home he hanged himself, but we are not informed whether or not it was in consequence of having a broken finger.

Another remarkable suicide was that of the Roman epicure who killed himself because he had only $400,000 remaining to him out of a large fortune.

A German, who felt himself impelled to imitate the philosopher mentioned above, but unable to travel so far, threw himself into a smelting furnace.

A Frenchman, with an unconquerable desire for notoriety, devised a plan such as only a Frenchman could devise. He fastened himself to an enormous rocket, and blew himself up.

Vatel, a cook, and a compatriot of the last mentioned, plunged his sword into his body because the fish had not arrived in time for dinner.

A Venetian shoemaker, named Matteo Lovat, in a fit of religious monomania, crucified himself in a very ingenious manner.

There existed in Paris, some years ago, a society which went by the name of the Friends of Suicide. It consisted of twelve members, and lots were cast annually to decide which of them should commit suicide next in the presence of his fellow-members. The number always remained at twelve, a new member being elected immediately after the death of the fated one. The society flourished for many years, and there was quite a rush for admission to membership. Each applicant was to prove that he was a man of honor; that he had experienced the injustice of mankind, the ingratitude of a friend, or the falsehood of a wife; and that he had felt for many years an irremediable vacuity of soul and distaste of life.

Hume once loaned a friend his manuscript "Essay on Suicide", and the latter was so impressed with the writer's argument that, immediately after returning the work, he killed himself.

We have read of a young lady who so muddled her head over Paine's "Age of Reason" (though, we believe, it does not recommend suicide), that she also killed herself.

But the eloquence of neither of these writers was so persuasive as that of the Ptolemaic philosopher who so convinced a large audience, before whom he was lecturing, of the advantages of suicide, that a great many of them went straightway and committed it.

A Frenchman, in the last century, wrote a large work advocating self-destruction, and thought it incumbent on himself to give a practical illustration of his tenets. With this object he threw himself into the Lake of Geneva.

A young French dramatist, named Escoupe, destroyed himself because his play failed. He was too clever for this ignorant and tasteless world, he said.

A young man, some years ago, blew out his brains because he could not persuade a London publisher to purchase a long epic poem which he considered equal to "Paradise Lost".

Another young man, ambitious to become an actor, who, on his first appearance, was hooted and hissed, also shot himself. Yet another, after breaking down in a speech, went into an auto-room, and, from sheer vexation, severed his jugular vein.

As evidence of the imitativeness of suicide, we may mention two incidents. A rich Jewish merchant threw himself from the London Monument, and was killed. His example was followed by a girl, and she was followed by a boy, who, on being questioned as to his motive, said he wanted to be talked about.

The other one occurred in the Hotel des Invalides. A man hanged himself from a cross-bar in a corridor. No suicide had been committed in the house for two years before, yet within a fortnight five others had hanged themselves from the same cross-bar, and the government was forced to shut up the passage.

The suicide of Jeremiah Clarke, at one time organist of St. Paul's, London, was rather whimsical. He had been disappointed in love, and determined to destroy himself. He rode some miles into the country, and came at last to a field, in one corner of which was a pond overhung by trees. The spot seemed peculiarly suited for his purpose, but he could not determine which was the better way to quit the world, by hanging or by drowning, and to settle his doubts he tossed up a penny. The coin fell on some mud, and stuck edge up; and this decided him that neither of the two proposed methods was the right one. He returned to London, therefore, and shot himself in his own room.

The inhabitants of Fressonville, in Picardy, were one night called from their beds in consternation by hearing the bells of the parish church ring in a most extraordinary manner. They went to the church and found a man suspended from the bell-clapper.

The coolest thing we ever heard of in the way of suicides was the conduct of the Englishman who advertised extensively that on a certain day he would put himself to death in Covent Garden Market, for the benefit of his wife and family, the public to be admitted at a uniform charge of a guinea apiece.

Grains of Gold.

The remedy for wrongs is to forget them.

Self conquest is the greatest of victories.

As fire trieth iron, so temptation trieth man.

They who forgive most shall be most forgiven.

Good manners are made up of petty sacrifices.

The best instruction is to practice what you teach.

It becomes a wise man to try negotiation before arms.

We are at best but stewards of what we falsely call our own.

Better bend the neck promptly than to bruise the forehead.

He only is a well-made man who has a good determination.

Happiness is a wayside flower growing by the highway of usefulness.

Charity may cover a multitude of sins, but that is not its regular business.

Activity is the presence of function—character is the record of function.

What is experience? A poor little hut constructed from the ruins of the palace of gold and marble called our illusions.

One Christian duty cannot be exchanged for another, and three virtues will not make amends for one remaining vice.

It is the mind which characterizes the man: and it is the mind which should be disencumbered of all needless and pernicious cares.

Femininities.

It takes $28,000,000 to keep our ladies in silks every year.

The greatest tyranny is to love where we are not loved again.

An attractive lace pin is a golden shell partly open, showing a pearl in the centre.

The thing that a woman always knows best is how some other woman ought to dress.

The errors of women spring almost always from her faith in the good or her confidence in the true.

Why is flirtation like an empty spoon?—Because there is nothing in it.

There are hours in life when the most trifling annoyances assume the proportion of a catastrophe.

Mrs. Haut Ton, at glove-counter: "Are those gloves first quality?" Saleswoman: "Oh, yes; I wear them myself!"

Your purity of soul is the best gift you can bring to your husband. Remember that upon you depends the opinion that he forms of other women.

Two greyhounds accompanying a Washington lady whose purse was stolen from her joined in the chase after the thief and succeeded in heading him off.

A feminine termination for usher will soon be wanted, as a Louisville, Ky., theatrical manager contemplates employing young women in that capacity.

To describe women, the pen should be dipped in the humid colors of the rainbow, and the paper dried with the dust gathered from the wings of a butterfly.

To pardon those absurdities in ourselves which we cannot suffer in others, is neither better nor worse than to be more willing to be fools ourselves than to have others so.

First old maid: "Sarah, Sarah!" Second old maid: "What do you want?" "There's a burglar in the house." "Tell him if he ain't already married I'll take him."

A lady in Massachusetts, who is arranging a cook-book to be sold at a fair, took a novel way of advertising the book by sending around to all her friends specimens of doughnuts made from one of the receipts.

Ladies' bonnets and hats are now so lofty that the newspapers suggest that they should either be hinged and let down on one side at church or theatre, or that a glass slide should be inserted in them through which people could peep.

Sir Walter Raleigh asked a favor of Queen Elizabeth, which he frequently did, to which she replied: "Raleigh, when will you leave off begging?" "When your majesty leaves off giving," he replied. So long must we continue to pray.

Charity should be done wisely and judiciously, not taken up as a mere passing craze and fashion, to be worn and laid aside, after being displayed to the eyes of the world as one lays aside last year's bonnet and gown as being no longer "the thing."

The handkerchief is fancifully worn, like a flower or corsage bouquet peeping out of the bosom from the waistcoat or jacket pocket, or tucked into the belt or sash that girdles the waist, and its colors are flower-like, and so is its size and adjustment.

So lucky was the month of June considered by the Romans that they looked upon it as the most propitious season of the year for contracting matrimonial engagements, particularly if the day chosen were that of the full moon, or of the conjunction of the sun and moon.

Princess Beatrice's girl baby was christened lately at Balmoral. The water used was from the River Jordan. The child was given the name of Victoria Eugenie Julia Ena—Eugenie, after the ex-Empress; Julia, after the Princess Battenberg, the German grandmother, and Ena, as a Scotch name.

"Prettiness" refers to external beauty on a small scale; "grace of manner" is a natural gift; "elegance" implies cultivation; "well-bred" is referable to general conduct rather than individual actions; "beautiful" is the strongest word of its class, implying softness and delicacy in addition to everything that is in similar words.

Two of the more recent and interesting topics of conversation in Xenia, O., were a 2-weeks-old baby that had already cut a tooth, and a young man who, on the day fixed for his wedding, determined to escape from the knot, but who, after going as far as Cincinnati, determined he'd chance it after all, and so turned back and made the bride happy.

A Maine woman, who takes pleasure in her poultry, has adopted a simple but excellent method of keeping her chickens at home. She ties a small corn cob to one leg, allowing it dangle at a distance of about six inches. The fowl can scratch and get about with ease, but, it is said, will not attempt to fly over palings or squeeze through a crack.

Mrs. Hendricks, to caller: "No, I didn't read the story, Mrs. Hobson. My husband read it and told me that it ended dreadfully, and I don't like that style of novel." Mrs. Hobson, surprised: "Why, it ended beautifully, and they were married in the last chapter." Mrs. Hendricks, with a set look on her face: "I'll speak to Mr. Hendricks about it again."

There lives in Troy, Me., a little girl about 8 years old, whose head is almost an iron gray, and it is steadily and perceptibly growing grayer, and the present indications are that long before she reaches womanhood her once raven-black hair will have become snow-white. Fright caused the change in color.

Mrs. Wedlock: "I saw Mr. Younglove to-day. He is going to be married, you know. He seems very happy." Mr. Wedlock: "Yes, I met him this morning. He is quite beside himself with joy." "How pleasant it is to see young people so happy!" "Yes. I couldn't help envying the young rascal. I told him I wouldn't mind marrying again myself." "Oh, you did, did you? Well, I should pity the woman; that's all I've got to say."

Masculinities.

A fast man is very slow when it comes to paying his debts.

Old bride: "Do you love me, darling?" Young husband: "I venerate you."

Nothing more excites to everything noble and generous than virtuous love.

Men who believe their fellow-creatures to be pigmies are generally hogs themselves.

At Gardiner, Mo., at a recent wedding the groom was but 13 years of age, while his bride was 60.

A young society man of Keokuk, Iowa, won a wager, made in jest, by eating 35 bananas at a sitting.

It has been proposed that the jinrikisha, the Japanese carriage drawn by a man, shall be introduced in London.

A man's nature runs either to herbs or weeds; therefore let him seasonably water the one and destroy the other.

It was a Boston boy who started the fashion of calling his father by his given name, and the fashion lasted about 30 seconds.

In an age like ours this should be a standing toast with all good Union men: "The ladies—may they be united—to a man."

The young man struggling with his first cigar, a contemporary thinks, should be one of the exhibits of the Danville, Va., tobacco fair.

"Isn't it terrible, hubby that they allow a man to have four wives in Turkey?" "Not so terrible as it would be if it were compulsory, my dear."

Isaac Ellis, a Petersburg, Va., patriarch, has recently taken unto himself his eighth wife. Ellis is 75 years old, and is the father, they say, of 36 children.

A Harvard senior has thirty handkerchiefs, with lace on the edges, hailed up conspicuously in his room, each the souvenir of a distant summer flirtation.

A physician has discovered that the older a man grows the smaller his brain becomes. This explains why the young man know everything and the old man know nothing.

"Yes," said Mrs. Bascom to her neighbor, Mrs. Ponsonby, "I always did admire Deacon Samuels. He is the most dignified looking man when he is asleep that I ever saw."

"Pa, what does a wooden wedding mean?" Pa, looking over his paper: "It means, my son, that if the wedded parties were free they wooden get married again. That's all."

A remarkable looking man is reported from Monroe county, Indiana. His name is Riley Smith. He is 7 feet 6 inches tall, and measures only 12 inches about the waist. He wears a No. 17 shoe.

Guest: "Well, good-bye, old man, and you've really got a very nice little place here!" Host: "Yes, but its rather bare just now; I hope the trees will have grown a good bit before you're back, old fellow!"

"My dear," said a very sick husband, "if I die will you see that my grave is kept green?" "Yes, John," was the sobbing reply. "You know how gladly I would do as much for you," he said. Then the wife dried her tears and the sick man got well.

The force of habit is always strong. A Baltimore young man who was calling on a street-car conductor's daughter says that the father wandered in at a rather late hour, and, opening the parlor door, mechanically exclaimed: "Sit close, please!"

"Miss Clara," said Smith, who means well, but is clumsy at a compliment, "can you tell me in what respect you resemble a mule?" Before Miss Clara had time to act, Smith solved the problem himself. "Because you have such small feet," he explained.

Philadelphia man: "What is the difference between a Boston woman of culture and a New York one?" Friend: "Don't know—can't even guess. Give it up." Philadelphia man: "Well, the Boston woman admires nothing she understands, and the New York woman understands nothing she admires."

Two men in Brooklyn had a smoky set-to some nights ago, on a wager as to which could consume the most tobacco in a given time. They were armed with clay pipes and a pound of powerful tobacco. Nine pipefuls knocked one of the smokers out and the other won by feebly pulling on a tenth.

"You don't need a 10-cent stamp on that letter, young man," said the postoffice official; "it will go for 2 cents." "This letter won't go for any 2 cents," replied the young man, tremulously; "it's to my best girl, an' she ain't one of your 2-cent kind. Gimme a 10-cent stamp, and I'll slip her in before the mail closes."

"I have ventured," he said, "to buy this diamond ring, hoping that you would allow me to slip it on your finger as a token of our engagement." "I am very sorry," she said; "but you are too late. I am already engaged; but if you will have it altered to my little finger I will shower upon you the wealth of a sister's affection."

Dennis Ferguson, a negro, is known in Chicago as the "King of the Beefsteaks." He employs many assistants, his wife acts as cashier, and he is getting rich. He has 2,061 regular customers who buy his tickets, of which 143 are women, and he knows the faces and names of the whole 2,000, besides remembering the names of hundreds of transient customers whom he sees but seldom.

Conversation overheard between a young married woman and a maiden: "I always like to have mamma come and stay with me," said the madame; "for she does a lot of work. As I have told George again and again, it's almost equal to having another servant in the house, and you know we really do need a chambermaid. The last time she made us a visit she actually wanted to get up early and make the kitchen fire when we sent Bridget away, but George wouldn't hear of it, and so I had to do it myself."

Recent Book Issues.

If there is not a copy of an old edition of Goulding's "Young Marooners" in your library, don't fail to get your boy the classic as it comes illustrated and enlarged from the press of Dodd, Mead & Co., New York. It is one of the finest books for boys ever published, and has been translated into most languages.

FRESH PERIODICALS.

The Connoisseur for December is by far the best number of this excellent art quarterly yet issued. Issued by Bailey, Banks & Biddle, this city.

The two bound volumes of *St. Nicholas*, for the past year, are now out, and form a magnificent Christmas present for the young folks. The half-yearly volume of the *Century Magazine* is likewise just published, and in its contents and get-up is the perfection of interest and beauty. The Century Company, New York.

St. Nicholas for December is redolent of a Christmas perfume from the first page to the last. That, with the best of stories, written by the leading authors in their line in the country, and the grand illustrations, extensive in number and unsurpassable in quality, make up a feast of good things on which both the eyes and hearts of the children can feed to repletion, with never a thought of surfeit. The Century Company, New York.

The Popular Science Monthly for December contains articles by Prof. Huxley, Grant Allen and the Duke of Argyle. Hon. David A. Wells, under the title of "Changes in the Relative Values of the Precious Metals," discusses mono-metallism, bi-metallism and tri-metalism. All the other articles are of the most interesting and valuable character likewise. The magazine comprehends the best and latest in the developments and discoveries of the whole world of science. Appleton & Co., publishers, New York.

The Forum for December contains eleven papers on topics of timely interest. These include "The Nullifiers of the Constitution," "The Issue Next Year," "The Western View of the Tariff," "A Review of the Fisheries Question," "Refunding the Public Debt," "Irish Agitation in America," "College Disturbances," "Communication at Sea," "Arguments for the Unseen," and "Books that Have Helped Me." Altogether it is one of the very best numbers yet issued. Terms, $5 a year. Published at No. 97 Fifth avenue, New York.

In *Cassell's Family Magazine* for December, the capital serial, "The Man by the Name of John," has a happy ending. There are good short stories; "A Russian Wedding" is described with all its strange customes; the Family Doctor gives some more plain and sound advice; the London and Paris fashion letters are brimming over with bright sayings and suggestions for the ladies, and everything else has its useful place in making up an admirable variety. This is one of the best magazines for its price in the world. Cassell & Co., New York.

The Eclectic Magazine for December, contains about twenty articles selected from the leading English magazines. Among them are "The Effects of Town Life on the Human Body," "Wealth and Working Classes," "European Politics from an East Indian Standpoint," "In Praise of the Country," "The Cause of Character," "The Eruptive Force of Modern Fanaticism," "Women of Chivalry," "The Experience of an English Engineer on the Congo," and several other articles. A new volume begins with the January number. E. R. Pelton, publisher, No. 29 Bond street, New York.

The December number of *The Magazine of Art*, which is the opening of a new volume, is an exceedingly rich number both in the character and exquisite finish of the engravings—five of which are full page, and several others nearly so—and the variety and high interest of the reading. The frontispiece is a rich etching by J. Doblo, from a painting by Seymour Lucas, entitled "Fleeced," which will bear a good deal of study. As rich and valuable as this popular art monthly has always been, the new volume opens with promises of richer things in the present year. Cassell & Co., New York; $1.50 a year.

The American Magazine for December.—The leading article in the Christmas number of this periodical is "Christ—Ideals in American Art," by William H. Ingersoll. It contains some fine descriptions and illustrations. Charles Gayarre has an article on "A Secret in Old New Orleans." The story, "Christmas in the Army," is told by one of the surviving members. There is an illustrated paper by R. F. Hemenway on "Salmon Fishing in the Cascapedia," and Z. L. White, has an illustrated sketch of the discoveries of natural gas at Findlay, Ohio. These, with other articles, make it a literary and pictorial gem. Published at Brooklyn, New York.

Deep Set Wonders

exist in thousands of forms, but are surpassed by the marvels of invention. Those who are in need of profitable work that can be done while living at home should at once send their address to Hallett & Co., Portland, Maine, and receive free, full information how either sex, of all ages, can earn from $5 to $25 per day and upwards wherever they live. You are started free. Capital not required. Some have made over $50 in a single day at this work. All succeed.

FIFTEEN MILLION FISH.

The pilchard—a small herring—is much sought by the fishermen of Cornwall, England, and their coming eagerly looked for. We will describe the scene of netting them as witnessed from the little huer's hut by Porthminster Head, just beyond the town of St. Ives:

There was a narrow path by the edge of the cliff, margined with cushions and thickets of gorse and heath and bracken. An old tarred boat, keel upwards, serves for shelter, and also as a receptacle for necessary gear, among which, hanging on the white-washed walls, are the huge speaking-trumpets called into requisition by the "huer," or watcher, so-called from the French *huer*, to shout.

The huer is a stalwart man of sixty. His face is wrinkled and weather-worn; but his light gray eye is as keen and searching as ever.

For weeks he has paced the narrow path day by day, until well-nigh sick with the hope deferred. Below, to the left, on the sandy beach, there is a fleet of boats high and dry. A few fishermen lounge about, some watching by the low seawall, others are asleep.

Two hundred yards out is a larger boat, manned by nine hands. There is a high, square heap, covered with tarpaulin, in the front of it; this is the big seine, and the men are the seiners, who are paid so much a day, with a promised share in the great take.

Behind it is a smaller boat with two hands; this carries a second seine, to be attached, if need be, to the much larger one.

The huer paces the narrow path, pausing now and then on his beat to scan the wide surface of the rippling sea. He hesitates a moment, and passes on; then turns again and shields his eyes with the brown wrinkled hands.

One long earnest look, and he rubs his eyes and hitches his trousers with quick, nervous action. At last his doubts are dispelled.

Three miles away, by the lighthouse, there is a reddish purple streak like a sunken granite reef; and hovering over it with discordant cries and flutter of white wings, a host of seabirds.

The huer runs to his hut and takes from a nail one of the long speaking-trumpets through which he gives the summons to prepare.

Was never call more welcome! The sleepers below are awakened as by an electric shock, and rush to their boats; the seiners bend to the oars, watching meantime as they pull, the lonely huer.

"Heva! Heva!" resounds through the narrow streets of the little town; and with wild shrill cries of excited women and children, and hoarse shouts of men, the crowds throng to the beach. "Heva! Heva!" is the cry of the people.

"What has happened?" asked the visitor astonished, and somewhat alarmed. "Is it fire? a wreck?"

"Heva! Heva!" is the only answer; and he also hurries to the cliff, but is warned away from the huer. Yes, there the latter stands, the observed of all observers, swaying in either hand a bush cut from the neighboring gorse or heather.

The pale faces of an eager crowd are watching him from below; but the cries and shouting are hushed. Nothing is heard now but the measured pulsings of the tide, and the mingled cries and clamor of the cloud of white-winged birds, as they momentarily dash into the sea and bear away their glittering prey.

The pilchard army heads for the bay; the red streak lengthens and widens; and as the huge school comes closer in, one may hear the rush as of a mighty wind, and see the ripples caused by millions of fins.

Meantime, the great seine has been shot; the "tolyer" attaches the second seine; the "blowsers" make fast the ropes ashore; and the pent-up feelings of the excited crowd on the cliff and beach break forth into one long loud cry of delight; for, with them, too, their "bread is on the waters."

Then commences the operation of "tucking"—that is, putting a deeper net within the seine, thus entirely surrounding the shoal beneath and around.

As the seine is now close inshore, the pilchards can be taken out at leisure. Baskets, buckets, or any convenient receptacles, are utilized for the purpose of lading out the fish into the boats; and women and children are all employed in cleaning, salting and stowing away the fish in bulk in the cellars.

On the occasion we have attempted to describe, when six thousand hogsheads were secured in one seine, the fish were valued at ninety thousand dollars; and reckoning the number of pilchards in a hogshead at two thousand five hundred, we have the astounding total of fifteen million fish!

A simple computation will show that to count this number at the rate of five a second would take a person very nearly seventy days of twelve hours each.

Pilchards, for which there seems to be no sale in England except when fresh, are shipped to various Mediterranean ports, Italy being the largest customer.

WHEN certain persons accuse us, let us ask ourselves what description of characters it is that they admire; we shall often find this a very consolatory question.

"True as steel" and as unerring as the mariner's compass is Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup.

As a pain-destroyer no liniment in the market equals Salvation Oil. Price only 25 cents.

GALLEY SLAVES.—The galley, a long, low, narrow vessel of war, having sails, but chiefly propelled by rows of oars on each side, was used as a part of the fleet of all maritime nations from the earliest historic times down to nearly the close of the eighteenth century.

The vessel drew but little water, and was especially convenient for coast service; but the advancement in the art of navigation, and especially the improvements in gunnery, at last put an end to this class of ships, which, it was said, had dominated the maritime world for over three thousand years.

In the most ancient times, to row in the galleys was considered honorable; but as the work was very laborious and it was difficult to procure voluntary recruits for it, the ancient nations used to put their prisoners of war to this service. Then it became customary to condemn criminals to the work.

In the Middle Ages the galley rowers were convicts and infidel prisoners, who were chained to the benches. The Turks retaliated and put captured Christians to the same labor.

In France, Spain and the Italian Republics during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the galleys were used as the means of punishment for all criminals; even those who had committed capital crimes were thus utilized. Heretics were particularly sought out for this purpose; and in France vagrants, beggars, poachers, etc., were employed, and, as even all these did not suffice to man the benches, slaves were bought from the Turks, negroes were brought from Guinea, and Indians were kidnapped in the New World.

Galley slaves were subjected to the greatest indignities and cruelties. Their heads and faces were shaved, they were always chained to their benches, and they rowed entirely naked, being only allowed to wear clothing when in port. They were seldom released, even when their time of service was accomplished. Henry IV ordered the captains of all galleys to retain prisoners for six years, even although condemned for a shorter time; and under Louis XIV galley slaves sentenced for only two or three years were often retained for fifteen years and more. Criminals preferred mutilation and even death to labor in the galleys. The galleys in France were abolished in 1748. They had been gradually growing out of use in that and other countries for some years.

CAUSES OF OIL-LAMP ACCIDENTS.—The wick or cotton is frequently so scanty in quantity and so tightly woven as to prevent a sufficient supply of oil to the flame. Its capillary power is destroyed by tight weaving. In this class of wick the upper part becomes dry; and the oxygen of the air, having no oil to act upon, consumes the wick to a considerable distance down the wick-tube, and heats the burner to a dangerous degree. The heat is communicated to the oil-reservoir, and a large amount of explosive gas is generated. Should this wick "moulder" down below where it is held by the pinions or wheels, it will drop into the oil, followed in all probability by an explosion.

The wick or cotton should be plaited, not woven with a weft or cross thread. A bad wick, if drawn between the fingers, will feel hard and knotty; a good wick will feel smooth and glossy, and if pressed between the finger and the thumb, will yield to the pressure, and, upon being released, will spring into shape again.

When purchasing a new wick, take the lamp burner to the dealer, and see that it fits easily, but not loosely, into the wick-tube, filling the tube in all parts; air the wick by the fire, but see that it is thoroughly soaked with oil before lighting. Renew the wicks once a week, and have them a little longer than the depth of the oil reservoir.

THERE are men who pride themselves on being just, who would not defraud any one of a penny, or take advantage of a mistake in business, or oppress the poor, but whose justice has its limits in shillings and pence. Such will not hesitate to speak ill of a neighbor, to cast a slur on his virtue, to defraud him of his good name; or they will selfishly indulge themselves at the expense of their families' comfort, or give way to moods and tempers which drain the happiness and embitter the lives of those dependent upon them. They would be insulted if accused of cheating, yet they are as effectually cheating others out of happiness that rightfully belongs to them as if they had defrauded them of money, which is valuable only as a means towards happiness.

FRUITLESS is sorrow for having done amiss if it issue not in the resolution to do so no more.

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Last September, at the urgent request of a friend (who had been afflicted as myself), I was induced to try your remedy. I was then suffering fearfully with one of my old turns. To my surprise and delight the first application gave me ease, after bathing and rubbing the parts affected, leaving the limb in a warm glow, created by the Relief. In a short time the pain passed entirely away, although I have slight periodical attacks approaching a change of weather. I know now how to cure myself, and feel quite master of the situation. RADWAY'S READY RELIEF is my friend. I never travel without a bottle in my valise. Yours truly,

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INTERNALLY, a half to a teaspoonful in half a tumbler of water will, in a few minutes, cure Cramps, Spasms, Sour Stomach, Nausea, Vomiting, Heartburn, Nervousness, Sleeplessness, Sick Headache, Diarrhœa, Colic, Flatulency and all internal pains.

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Humorous.

WHAT SHE SAID.

A lover once pondered an amorous plan
For many a day,
Resolved that the tale of his passion should be
Told in a neat way.
The tenderest terms of the language he sought,
And conned them till all were arranged as they ought;
"I'm perfectly certain what I'll say," he thought,
"Oh, what will she say?"

Yet, strangely enough, when he knelt by her side,
It chanced to befall
That none of the eloquent speeches he tried
Would come at his call.
His cowardly tongue could say little, at best,
But his brave eyes said much—and a kiss said the rest,
While she only hid her fair face in his breast,
Saying nothing at all!

—U. N. Nons.

A pointed letter—A.

Round of entertainments—A circus.

A suit of male—"Will you marry me, dearest?"

Two heads are better than one if a person is desirous of entering the freak business.

The chaps you see in the country doubled up over a bicycle are supposed to be on pleasure bent.

A cross old bachelor suggests that births should be announced under the head of "New Music."

There are very few brass bands in a military parade that can play as many airs as the drum-major puts on.

The difference between a Christian and a cannibal is that one enjoys himself and the other enjoys other people.

The man who has an expensive health lift fitted up in his bedroom seldom gets up muscle enough to bring up the family coal.

Don't call a very large, sinewy man a prevaricator. If you are sure he is a prevaricator, hire another man to break the news to him.

"I can't say fairer than that," was Artemus Ward's comment after he had informed the public that they could not go into his show without paying, but could pay without going in.

Wife, to husband who has just returned from a visit: "So you intend to go back again at the earliest opportunity?" Husband: "Yes." Wife: "You must have felt perfectly at home." Husband: "Oh, no; I enjoyed myself very much!"

A lady who was greatly annoyed by the whistling of a man a few seats behind her remarked to a friend: "It is said that the whistling man is one who thinks little. But he makes others think; and, oh, what dreadful thoughts they think, too!"

"What can you tell me about Esau?" queried the pedagogue. "Esau," responded the youth, with the glib alacrity of one who feels himself, for once, on safe ground, "Esau was a writer of fables, who sold his copyright for a bottle of potash."

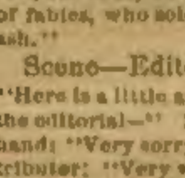
Scene—Editor's sanctum. Contributor: "Here is a little article which I wish to submit to the editorial—" Editor, with a graceful wave of the hand: "Very sorry; we are full just now." Contributor: "Very well; I will call in again when some of you are sober."

Furniture dealer, to elderly maiden: "And there is another advantage, ma'am, which the folding-bed has over the ordinary kind." Elderly maiden: "What is that, sir?" Furniture dealer: "You don't have to look under it to see if there is a man there."

They had missed the train, and she was telling him so emphatically. "You are not in your right mind, are you?" she said. "Certainly not, my love," he responded sweetly, as husbands always do under such circumstances: "certainly not; I'm in my left mind."

Father, trying to read the paper: "What was that awful racket in the hall just now?" Mother: "One of the children fell down the stairs." Father, irascibly: "Well, you tell those children that if they cannot fall down the stairs quietly they won't be allowed to fall down them at all."

Nebraska farmer: "These railroads are getting entirely too numerous and impudent; but I'll fix 'em," Railroad superintendent: "Well, what do you propose to do about it?" Farmer: "Why, you see, they run so blamed slow that I've brought a suit for damages against 'em for shadin' the crops."



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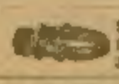

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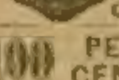

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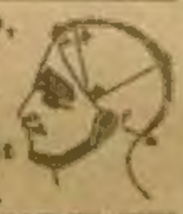

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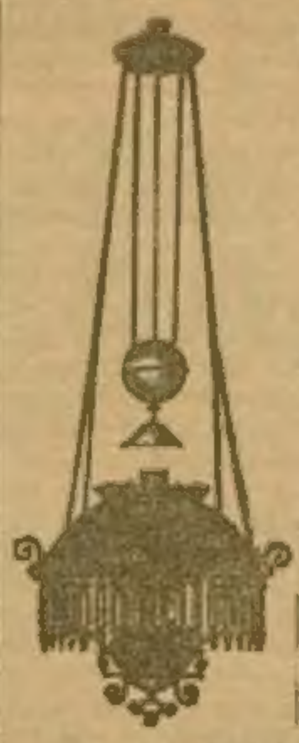

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Latest Fashion Phases.

A few weeks ago and furs and furs alike would have sounded idle words, instead of the comfortable necessities they now appear. Autumn has gone, and the pretty phrase "rose lined from the cold" seems chilly comfort, compared with the more practical, if less picturesque, idea of being fur-lined from it.

In the matter of attire, we perhaps never realize the true import of being ensconced like a bean in its downy pod as we do when clad in one of the luxurious garments, which are the modern development of our first parents' primitive clothing, made of the skins of beasts.

Before examining the latest designs into which the furs are being fashioned for our comfort and adornment, it is interesting to view them in a less advanced stage of manufacture, and to compare the rich depth and lustre of a bundle of wonderful Russian sable skins, with the silvery bloom overlying the softness of the coat of the finest sea otter, perhaps, ever caught.

Nothing can outvie the Russian sable, the king of furs, and these present ones are magnificent specimens, "wonderful for gloom of gloss;" yet the sea otter is almost as beautiful with its double surface, which gives such play of light and shade, and its depth of fur, which, on being blown into, reveals lovely tawny fawn tints, as soft and various as those of a moth's wings.

The Hudson's Bay sables, though not equal to the finest Russian, are still very desirable, and the enormous difference in price make them possible to those who would never dream of possessing the costlier fur.

Some of the Hudson Bay skins shown are difficult to distinguish from the Russian ones, possessing as they do the peculiar coolness and richness of tint, without any hint of yellow, which is the characteristic of good sable. Another advantage of purchasing Hudson Bay sables just now is that their prices are unusually moderate and must rise.

The dyed blue and silver foxes are waning in favor, and the reaction seems to be setting in in the direction of dark long-haired furs.

Boas are still worn, though the squirrel tail ones are superceded by those of bear, a charming one being made of a bear skin nearly white, but with the long hairs taking a golden gloss towards the tips, the effect being a "shot" of gold and white, which would be exquisite for a fair-haired woman wearing a white evening mantle or wrap.

Several short visites and dolmans have been devised to take the place of the useful but vulgarized shoulder cape; and among these one of the newest and quaintest is a sleeveless jacket of sealskin fitting closely behind, and ending with a short tail at the back of the waist, the fronts being Zouave. It is beautifully cut, and would look well with a sealskin toque, and a black or seal brown gown for skating, but the absence of sleeves makes it less generally useful than are the short and close-fitting mantles of the same fur, trimmed with insertions of Astrachan or undyed seal.

Though we must protest on principle against the trimming of furs with passementerie, etc., we must allow the richness of effect attained in a somewhat close-fitting short coat of sealskin, heavily adorned with epaulettes, cuffs, collar and shoulder cords, and ornaments of brown and gold; with thickly knotted strings of brown and gold crossing the chest.

A charming little suit of gray and white would be pretty for a bride's winter going away gear, consisting as it does of a gray vigogne dolman, lined with quilted white satin, and with under fronts of white Persian lamb; a vigogne muff, trimmed with the fur, and with a gray and white sea-bird; and a small and pretty bonnet to match of gray velvet, with the curly white fur artfully introduced, and a bird, similar to that on the muff, perched in front.

While on the subject of hats and bonnets, we must mention the new sealskin toques, which are softer and more becoming than those of old, being higher in the crown, and with an extra fulness set in pleats on one side.

A really marvellous hat is made of moleskins, exquisitely dressed and taking delicate shades of elephant gray, which harmonize and contrast with the warmer tone of the drab ribbon and panache of ostrich feathers wherewith it is trimmed.

The hat is of a large slouch shape, very becoming and extremely light; but, on our reflecting on the slaughter of moles needful for its production, we are made to hold our breaths by the statement that a little while since one firm manufactured a moleskin coat for a lady which reached down to the fair wearer's heels, and which took between six thousand and eight thousand skins.

The highest praises rise to our lips as we see a marvellous evening cloak, which would entirely shroud the happy owner's gown. It is difficult to descant on perfection, and we have never seen anything more perfect in its way than this mantle, of an exquisite shade of heliotrope plush, richly yet delicately adorned with gold passementerie, which has an iridescent effect from the various though subdued hues of the colored tinsels, interwoven and blended together with the gold.

The cloak is plainly but beautifully cut, fitting closely in the back; but it derives its particular charm from being faced and lined throughout with white Thibet, the snowy, curly, soft fur which has been popular with the wealthy of St. Petersburg for such wraps.

Equally tempting and exciting to the passion of envy is a huge coat of sealskin, the double-breasted fronts and large collar being lined with sable. Roomy and comfortable as this delightful garment is, it is yet so well fashioned as to make the wearer appear slimmer than an ordinary velvet mantle or tight covert coat would do; and of the becomingness of a soft long fur coat of this order every woman is judge.

Less gorgeous, but equally comfortable, is a coat of snuff-brown cloth, made with horn buttons, and lapped seams, like a man's fur-lined driving-coat, to which indeed it forms a feminine equivalent in every respect, with its collar and cuffs of gray fox, and its lining of opossum.

New styles of making dresses, however admirable, to be a success require to be carried out in good stuffs. Some of these are all pure wool, which are calculated to not only wear for years, but to show off the present becoming make of gowns to great advantage. They are porous and light, and those that are not of pure natural colors are dyed with vegetable dyes only. Some show close-set stripes in black and brown and other mixtures, with crosslines of a lighter shade; some are a good chocolate brown; others dark blue with a brown check.

These cloths are made into dresses, with either buff cloth or Suede leather waistcoats having a row of bright gold-looking studs down the centre, which give much distinctive smartness.

The bodices have long revers united at the waist by a buckle, which arrangement adds length to the figure. They are bordered with tinsel cord, made to match all the combinations in the tweeds and homespuns.

A new trimming, which is a mixture of gold and steel, and open-work braid with edge is employed in two widths, forming a panel of stripes. If the waistcoat is of leather, a single line of this braid goes down the centre; if it is of cloth, five or six rows, widening on the bust and contracting at the waist, form a vest trimming, and three or four rows trim the upper part of the sleeves. This garniture shows to great advantage on the blue-faced cloths.

A new way of arranging the basque at the back, is by supplementing the centre-pointed flap by two side lappets attached, with cord on the joins. The bodices are cut with much skill, as is shown in a black and red line check of large size on a cream ground. This is cut on the back and front, every line matching.

A red serge with a white hair stripe shows the skilful manipulation of those stripes on the skirt; they fall straight in the front, but are caught up four times at the waist in easy folds, and in such a way that at the back they are seen on the cross. The bodice has a spotted linen Marcella waistcoat.

Many of these pretty dresses are made for a trousseau, the going-away gown is a blue-faced cloth, with velvet of a lighter tone for collar and cuffs; the outdoor jacket is trimmed with a deep rolled collar of natural white Astrakan.

Another style of trimming is composed of black braid, worked with silk in lace stitches, and carried in lappels down the front, centre of back, and shoulders, and lined with white satin.

Odds and Ends.

NICE DISHES AT LITTLE COST.

As a rule, where economy is practised in every detail, the better the cooks, and the more will the great utility of these preserved goods be appreciated.

Macedoines (mixed vegetables) deserve especial mention; no housekeeper who values appearances can afford to dispense with them, for it is almost impossible to enumerate their manifold uses. Being cooked it must be borne in mind that they only need reheating, not re-cooking. It will be found that their bright colors harmonize with almost any dish, but we may refer to mutton cutlets as a typical one for our purpose. We will assume they have been nicely trimmed, egged, coated with bread-crumbs, and fried a golden brown, then finish off with a little frill of white paper. When garnished tastefully with the macedoines we have a nice hot entree, or an equally good cold supper dish.

Or, supposing the legs and wings of a fowl or fowls are handy, either boiled or roasted; if the former, coat them with white sauce, and dot the vegetables about in the sauce, and make a little pile of them in the centre of the dish. If roasted, glaze the joints, and heap the macedoines in the middle as before. We will inter that the breasts of the poultry have been eaten, and any bones and trimmings will make delicious stock, which will be found useful in concocting croquettes, rissoles, kromeskies, and the like. The three named all owe their foundation to a nice thick mince, so, if you have some good chicken stock and any scraps of meat, mince it very finely and add to it some ham or bacon, and a little tongue, if possible. Season pleasantly with herbs, salt, pepper, and a dash of lemon rind. It should be quite thick; if stock runs short, use a small quantity of good white sauce. The preparation must be quite cold before being moulded; if cork-shaped, and dipped in thick batter before frying, we have kromeskies; if made into balls or cakes, and egged and crumbed, then fried, we get croquettes; if enclosed in puff pastry, we have rissoles. Sometimes crushed vermicelli is used instead of bread-crumbs, and here again remnants come in.

Boudinettes (small sausages) may be made from almost anything; the remains of any kind of cooked fish being very suitable. Take half a pound, free from bone, and mince it small, and then mix with it half its weight of mashed potatoes, and a little sauce, such as parsley, anchovy, or even plain melted butter; failing that, a spoonful or two of cream. Bind the mixture, when cool, with the yolks of one or two raw eggs, according to the quantity, and dip into the whites of the eggs, and browned bread-crumbs. Fry, and serve on pieces of fried bread. This would be a good way to use up boiled cod-fish and oyster sauce left over from dinner.

Oyster Boudinettes are real dainties, and here is a good method of making them: Melt an ounce of butter in a saucepan, add an ounce of sifted flour, and cook thoroughly; then stir in half a pint of milk and cream mixed. Boil well, then put in the oysters—sufficient when minced to fill a quarter-pint measure—and season to taste with salt, pepper, nutmeg, anchovy sauce—just a dash to bring out the flavor—and a mite of finely-minced lemon rind. Add an egg or two, and try as before directed. Tinned oysters will do for these, though fresh are better, and a further improvement may be effected by simmering the beards in the liquor to extract all the flavor, then using it in place of some of the milk and cream. Garnish with tinned prawns and fried parsley.

A delicate morsel can be had from any odds and ends of game or chicken pates, both sold in tins. Fancy shapes of fried bread should be spread with the minced meat, then some finely chopped ham sprinkled over, with a pinch of parsley, scalded before being chopped; or a hard boiled egg, yolk only, passed through a sieve, can be used instead. The same scraps will make nice sandwiches, and fried bread is more suitable than bread and butter for them.

A hint on cooking fish: Those who have never steamed it are advised to try the plan; it is far superior to boiling, the flesh being firmer and with more flavor.

A very good entree can be had from the remainder of a calf's head. Cut the pieces into any shape and size, so that they are uniform; dip them into liquid butter, then grated Parmesan, next into beaten egg and fine crumbs. Repeat this a second time, then put into a frying basket and cook in hot fat for a few seconds. Serve with sauce piquante or tomato sauce.

We may say that the bread used for crumbs should be at least two days old, and a wire sieve is far better than a grater, the crumbs being much finer and uniform in size.

"Lost time," said the teacher solemnly, "is lost for ever." "So is anything else that you lose," said the new boy. "Oh, no," said the teacher; "you may lose anything else and find it again!" "Then 'tain't lost," said the new boy; and somehow the teacher did not know how to go on with conversation. And yet he had been warned against that very boy.

Confidential Correspondents.

A. S.—Astrachan is a fine description of fur, the produce of a variety of sheep found in Bokhara, Persia, and Syria.

CHESTER.—In case of the death of the President and Vice-president the Secretary of State succeeds to the presidency.

RED-LETTER.—The Chinese have no equivalent for our Sabbath, but they have many holidays, and they know how to enjoy themselves in their own fashion.

ZACKERY.—We believe that muslin can be painted on with ordinary water-colors if first dressed with a little thin isinglass to which a drop or two of glycerine has been added.

HOWARD.—"Tulle" is pronounced as "tule," and "amateur" as though the spelling were "am-a-tur," the accent being on the first syllable, and the vowel in the last syllable being sounded like that in spur.

HARRY.—In penitentiary offenses the term of imprisonment is so arranged as not to expire between November 15 and February 15, in order that the prisoner may not be discharged without means of supporting himself through the winter.

PERKER.—The sounds in imitation of horses galloping heard from behind the scenes in plays are produced by two hoofs of wood, shod with steel horse shoes which are struck rapidly, first on india-rubber, then on wood and finally on a block of marble.

ANNO.—It is merely nervous indigestion. Many people who work with their brains suffer thus, and some unfortunate creatures are plunged into terrible mental depression by the complaint. Gentle exercise and avoidance of all hot drinks will relieve the patient.

ORPHAN.—As your uncle kindly offers you a home until you can pay your way, your best course would be to go to his residence, and see what you can do, with his assistance. It is possible that you might get sufficient employment to pay for your tuition, and meet other necessary outlays.

PHILOMATH.—The soft substance wears out the hard one because of the momentum with which the soft one is impelled. If you swing a very soft rope with extreme rapidity, the rope stiffens out, and, as the rate of the revolution is increased, that soft hanging rope becomes as rigid as an iron rod.

Y. B.—You seem to have permitted yourself to indulge in morbid and extravagant notions about love. The probability is that you are already in love with the gentleman to whom you refer. Ask him to call and see you, and give him a chance to show and express his love for you, and your doubts will be apt to be dissipated in a short time.

HARRY W.—The rites of initiation for nuns vary in different Orders, and it is possible that in some instances the ceremony includes the placing of the candidate in a coffin, to indicate that she is to be dead to the world, though we know of no such case. In some cases nuns are confined to the convent, but by no means in all. They are frequently, indeed, to be seen in the streets.

DESPAIRING.—What would be the best employment for you depends on your education, your physical strength, and your health, and as we know nothing about these conditions we cannot advise you. As you are only twenty-one years old, the probability is that some young man will yet turn up who will propose an agreeable partnership with you for life. Then will be the time for you to decide as to your future career.

SHERIF.—For mounting photographs on stiff boards nothing is better than good French glue need rather thin. Cut your photographs to the required size on a sheet of glass, using a sharp knife and straight edge. Place between damp blotting-paper for about ten minutes; then brush the back evenly with the glue, and place in position on the mount. Put a piece of clean blotting-paper on top, and smooth down with the fingers.

NORWICH.—Ivory may be polished by rubbing with finely-powdered pumice-stone and water, finishing with putty-powder, or even good whiting; use a piece of plain flannel to put on last surface. It may be bleached by exposing in a tray with a little water, under a sheet of glass, to bright sunshine. If too large for such treatment, shake up equal quantities of turpentine and water, well wet the ivory, and expose to the sun. The wetting should be repeated from time to time.

ETHER.—When you tell us of prophetic dreams we are sceptical. That sudden and immaterial violence which characterises the changes in a dream is not in any way connected with the facts of waking life. The body goes on living during slumber, and the blood circulates in the brain, causing a process to go on which resembles thought. The sleeper is affected by external conditions, and you may influence the current of his streaming visions if you can manage to influence his sensory nerves without waking him; but the notion that a dreamer may actually prophesy coming events is too ludicrous. Remarkable coincidences are on record, and indeed, considering that hundreds of thousands of millions of people are nightly liable to dream, it would be very surprising if some chance vision did not occasionally seem to foreshadow a future occurrence.

WELL-WISHER.—If we cared to deal with theological niceties, we might contend that marriages, like all other earthly events, were ordained from the first; but we prefer to take shorter views just at present. It is simply impossible to explain the mysterious attraction that draws one individual to another and leads to that sweet delirium which we call "falling in love." There is no apparent law: the weak-minded man is irresistibly attracted by the tyrannous woman; the ugly man is admired by women who possess beauty; the mean soul masters the noble soul; the brilliant poet marries the dull feminine boor. It seems topsy-turvy; but we may say thus much to you—a sweet healthy girl who has learned to forget herself and who studies the feelings of others is almost certain to attract some good man. She may be plain—nay, ugly—but goodness and bright unconsciousness of self enable her to charm those whom she meets. You are evidently a fascinating girl; if you forget your own little wishes and vanities, you will find that the men who are at present merely pleasing companions who like your society will become friends, and perhaps one of them may prove worthy of being more than a friend.